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Foothill Family Celebrates Teen Family Services Class of 2017 Graduates

PASADENA, Calif. – For pregnant and parenting teens, celebrating a high school graduation can be a luxury rather than an expectation. Nationwide, only one-third of teen mothers typically graduate from high school. Teen parents face much more than heavy homework loads and difficult classes; these young women and men must also actively care for a growing child while sometimes struggling amid poverty, homelessness, and abuse.

At Foothill Family, we bring that 33.3 percent statistic up to 74 percent.

The youth involved in Teen Family Services at Foothill Family have additional support and access to resources to help them persevere through challenges that extend far beyond those inherent in adolescence. Through family-focused case management, Foothill Family's program enables the teens to develop the skills necessary to continue their education while raising a young child or preparing to have a baby.

"We are so proud of these young adults in our program," said Maria Muñiz, Foothill Family's Director of Youth and Family Services. "With the help from our program and the guidance and support from their case managers, their perspective on life shifts from 'I can't do this' to 'I have to do it better for me and now, for my child.' It's nothing short of inspirational."

The Teen Family Services Class of 2017 have reported that three percent will attend a four-year university, 68 percent will attend community college or a vocational school, five percent will join the workforce, three percent will join the military, and 21 percent are undecided.

"Assistance for teen parents and their babies has long been a part of the Foothill Family history," said Foothill Family Chief Executive Officer Steve Allen. "Since the 1940s, Foothill Family has purposefully supported this youth demographic. Incidents of teen pregnancy in the country were highest in the 1940s and '50s, and Foothill Family had the foresight to put a program in place to support and propel those young women and men forward. Foothill Family is proud to continue that tradition of care and intervention to ensure that these young parents have bright futures, and that their children grow up supported and loved."

On June 9, 2017, Foothill Family hosted local leaders and family members at The Courtyard by Marriott in Baldwin Park to celebrate the Class of 2017 graduates who are pregnant or parenting. These teens, from the San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys, Glendale, and Burbank, celebrated their graduation and received certificates of recognition for their participation in the Teen Family Services program.

The event's Mistress of Ceremonies was Norma Roque, anchor on Univision's KMEX-TV Channel 34. An inspirational address about persistence and determination was presented by Elena Robles, senior field

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representative for the office of Congresswoman Grace Napolitano. The presentation culminated with rousing encouragement from Los Angeles County 1st District Supervisor Hilda Solis.

Community supporters in attendance included representatives from the offices of Congresswoman Grace Napolitano (Senior Field Representative Elena Robles), Senator Anthony Portantino (District Representative Dominick Correy), LA County Supervisor Hilda Solis (East San Gabriel Valley District Director Norma Martinez and Field Deputy Andrea Moreno), LA County Supervisor Kathryn Barger (Field Deputy Christian Daly), and Assemblymember Blanca Rubio (Field Representative Alfonso Somilleda), as well as members of the Foothill Family Board of Directors and Corporate Committee.

Foothill Family was founded in 1926 and provides a range of community-based mental health and social services to at-risk populations in Southern California. Its mission, to build brighter futures for children and families, has helped Foothill Family earn a reputation for providing high-quality services aimed at empowering families and strengthening communities. Programs include mental health and school-based counseling for children, child abuse prevention and treatment, domestic violence prevention and treatment, early child development programs, services for pregnant teens and their babies, family counseling, and youth development. Last year, more than 24,000 children and their families benefited from Foothill Family's life-changing programs. For more information, please call (626) 993-3000 or visit the website at www.foothillfamily.org.



A portion of the TFS graduated pictured with leadership (seated l.-r.): Foothill Family Chief Clinical Officer Tami Mitsumori-Miller, Foothill Family Director of Youth and Family Services Maria Muniz, LA County Supervisor Hilda Solis, Foothill Family CEO Steve Allen, Foothill Family Board Members Anita Lawler, Julietta Perez, and Silvia Solorio, Mistress of Ceremonies Norma Roque.

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