

Mae Louise Mays Softball Tournament for Foster Children

San Francisco Foster Youth Fund

24th Annual Charity Softball Tournament

On Saturday, June 15th, the San Francisco Foster Youth Fund, a non-profit started by children's protective services workers to raise funds for foster children, will be staging its 24th annual charity softball tournament. Two dozen teams, including supportive community organizations, but largely drawn from city government departments, will be competing in a one-day, double-elimination tournament at Moscone Field in the Marina. The tournament attracts over 500 players, plus their families.

This year the Fund is proud to announce a permanent change in the name of the tournament to honor the work of Mae Louise Mays. She was an adoptions worker for the city during the 1960s and early 70s, and a pioneer in recruiting African American families to adopt African American children from foster care. Social workers today build on her work. Ms. Mays also has a unique connection, having married the greatest baseball player ever, one who had a similar commitment to helping children, Willie Mays. Mae Louise Mays passed away in April, 2013.

The Fund

The San Francisco Foster Youth Fund (formerly known as the Workers' Children's Fund) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that raises funds for the education and enrichment of San Francisco foster children. Founded in 1986, the Fund was created by social workers who knew that, because government support for foster care only covered the basics of housing, clothing, and food, many foster children did not have normal opportunities for enrichment such as taking music lessons or participating in sports. In recent years, the fund has also provided support for college expenses. A portion of the funds also go to providing low-income children with scholarships to Rec & Park programs.

The Tournament

For over two decades, the Fund's signature fundraising event has been its annual softball tournament, which is staged in partnership with the Recreation and Park Department. Played against a backdrop of the Bay and the Golden Gate Bridge, the tournament is always lively. The games range from close to blowouts, sometimes pitting police officers against teams of social workers and librarians, but the spirit of the day is fun and fellowship, with players knowing that the tournament supports the city's most vulnerable children. Families and friends of players come to picnic, barbecue, and cheer their teams, and through the day the tournament has activities for children. Raffle tickets, offering quality prizes donated by sponsors, are sold, and the drawing winners are announced between games.

How the Funds are Used

Foster children are at extreme risk for dropping out of school, entering the juvenile justice system, and early pregnancy. The San Francisco Foster Youth Fund is run entirely by volunteers; every penny goes directly to foster children. Each year the Fund raises more than \$70,000, including \$12,000 from the tournament. Last year the Fund made it possible for:

- ❖ 104 foster youth to have tuxedos and dresses for proms, letterman jackets, class rings, and caps, gowns, and photos for graduation;
- ❖ 74 foster children to take lessons, including music and karate classes, receive SAT preparation assistance, or participate in enrichment activities;
- ❖ 57 San Francisco foster children to go to summer camp;

- ❖ 55 foster children to participate in school bands or sports leagues, purchasing equipment and paying fees and travel costs; and
- ❖ 12 young adults who aged out of foster care to have assistance with college expenses.

How to Participate

The tax deductible entry fee for each team is \$525. City departments and businesses or community groups that want to support foster children are eligible to compete. Each team must have a minimum of ten players, and can have up to 20 players, with the roster evenly divided between men and women. Teams are guaranteed a minimum of two games in the day-long tournament. This is slow-pitch softball, and event coordinators will provide balls and wooden bats. To participate in the tournament, the fee must be received by May 17th. To find out more about the tournament, please contact Dan Kelly (557-5871; Dan.Kelly@sfgov.org). Supporters can also contribute to the Fund through its Web site: (http://www.sffosteryouthfund.org/AboutUs_TowardsTheFuture.html) and are encouraged to get on its mailing list to find out about other events through the year.



Looking like Pablo Sandoval, a player scores on a teammate's hit to the outfield.



After a day of fun, players from the Department of Public Health show off their runner-up trophy.



Winning for the fourth year in a row, the 2012 San Francisco Police Department team raises four fingers, daring another team to take the trophy from them.