



Dear Friend,

Thank you for your interest in the Burton Foundation. As you know during my years in politics, my great passion was to help the less fortunate in our society. I have continued this work through the Foundation by helping the most vulnerable among us – the 100,000 homeless children living in California.

In our first year, 2005, we were able to provide grant awards of more than \$1 million to thirty-one local and regional organizations helping over 7,500 homeless children. These organizations provide academic tutoring, mentoring, mental health counseling, dental and health care, basic needs and life enrichment. In 2006 we continued to provide for groups helping children by giving out another million in grants. Please visit our website at www.johnburtonfoundation.org, for a listing of our grantees.

We also expanded our mission to focus on the problems impacting the lives of California's 85,000 foster children. We helped lead efforts in Sacramento to provide more funds for foster care programs that are run by the counties so they may provide additional services. We were also able to get \$50 million worth of transitional housing for emancipated foster children into the state's recently passed housing bond. By increasing the budget for foster care programs from approximately \$10 million to over \$80 million, we were able to reduce social worker case loads for foster children as well as providing additional money for services. We are very proud of the Foundation's work so far, and this year we will continue helping programs dealing with homeless children, but we have also embarked on the following projects that will have an even greater positive impact on our foster children.

Federal Foster Care Extension Initiative: We are leading a nationwide effort to extend the age of eligibility for foster youth. We will work closely with members of Congress, national foster care organizations, and law enforcement agencies to enact federal legislation extending eligibility past a youth's 18th birthday in order to help ensure that he or she receives the services and help necessary to effectively transition from childhood to adulthood. By extending the age of eligibility to 21, we will also be contributing greatly to juvenile crime prevention because many of these children who are emancipated with no help or assistance at the age of 18 end up in juvenile or youth authorities, on the streets, or even in adult prisons.

Restoring Foster Children to the 2010 Census: We will continue to be the leading force working with members of Congress to restore the "foster child" category to the 2010 Census. The U.S. Census Bureau plans to eliminate the "foster child" category from the 2010 Census and thereby strip us all of the ability to assess where foster children reside, the demographics of the families caring for these youth, and how best to allocate scarce resources. Foster youth deserve our special attention and we will do what we can to make them count.

Transitional Housing Placement Plus (THP+) Implementation Project: seeks to reduce homelessness among former foster by expanding access to THP+ program – California's only housing program for emancipated foster kids. This program provides foster youth with affordable housing as well as the necessary services, including job training, education, and advocacy, mentoring and case management.

The Foundation provides training and technical assistance to county agencies and community based organizations which translate directly to helping emancipated foster children who may otherwise be homeless.

Our efforts and training have resulted in a 300% increase in state funding which will more than triple the number of former homeless foster youth living in safe and stable housing with supportive services. There is still a long way to go until every emancipated kid can receive the benefits of this program.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Transitions Project: will ensure California's disabled foster youth will receive SSI benefit assistance in their transition from foster care by helping improve local practices and transition planning for disabled foster youth and working with agencies to develop a comprehensive state policy to address systemic issues. Each year approximately 500 foster youth with physical and/or mental disabilities are emancipated at the age of 18. One critical resource for the children is Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Unfortunately, a very small percentage of eligible children in the foster care system receive this federal aid. By working with county officials and social workers, we hope to insure that these children qualify for SSI while still in the foster care system.

For many of these children SSI income will be the only economic support they have once they exit foster care. Additionally, federal rules allow children to accumulate up to \$2000 in SSI payments, prior to their being emancipated. We hope to ensure that every mentally and physically disabled foster child emancipating out of care transitions not only with their SSI eligibility, but also with the \$2000 that would provide them with the ability to find a place to live and some food to eat.

We all do better when we help each other. These values and beliefs have guided me in building my foundation. I remain committed to working with others to give these kids a fighting chance at a healthy and fulfilling life. I consider it my obligation as a citizen and a way to repay the people of California for putting their confidence in me. The generosity of caring people like you makes our work possible. I hope that you will consider making a gift to the Foundation to help fulfill our collective commitment to these young people.

Please make your check payable to **John Burton Foundation** and mail it to:

**John Burton Foundation
235 Montgomery Street, Suite 1142
San Francisco, CA 94104**

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (415) 348-0011.

Peace and friendship,

John Burton