

Five Acres Plays Host to PISF Students

By **KEN JUANER MALATE**
The Outlook

Darryl Brown was once a resident of Five Acres. Like many others, he had family struggles growing up.

He was first sent to Five Acres at the age of 6. When asked what he liked most about living in a child and family facility, Brown said, "the birthdays."

"I never celebrated my birthday," Brown said. "The first time I did was when I was 7, here at Five Acres. I will never forget that moment."

Brown found the family-type support he wished for and needed at Five Acres.

Last Monday, the Pasadena Independent Schools Foundation (PISF) visited Five Acres in Altadena to commence its first on-site visit and guests got a chance to tour the grounds, see the patio where they had a clear view of Five Acres' backyard and visited the building that houses the children.

"I found the tour to be really interesting. Also, I thought the guest speaker [Brown] was really compelling," said Ali Preiss of Flintridge Prep. "It's great to hear someone that gets through the difficulties and to see them come out and have such great accomplishments."

Brown is now a senior at Marshall Fundamental with a 4.0 grade-point average. He talks about wanting to attend USC, UCLA or UC Berkeley.

"It's an honor to be considered by PISF. Five Acres flourishes because of community support," Executive Director Bob Ketch said about PISF's philanthropic work. "It's great because it helps us provide needy children with the service that they require."

Five Acres, The Boys' and Girls' Aid Society of Los Angeles County, is a child and family services agency that strengthens families and prevents child abuse through treatment and education in community-based and residential programs. Originally founded as an orphanage in 1888, Five Acres currently offers an array of services including residential care and education, mental health services in homes and schools, foster care and adoptions and domestic violence prevention.

Daily routine includes waking up for breakfast, going to school, coming home at 2 p.m., doing homework, eating dinner and taking time off where they can choose to do whatever they please. On weekends, the kids can be seen outside the facility at the mall, maybe watching a movie. At first glance, everything seems to be perfectly normal, perhaps this is what Five Acres strive to give its inhabitants, a sense of normalcy.

"We are a non-profit organization that provides continuum care, like providing shelter or support for children who might need them," Director of Residential Treatment Will Max said. "As for our goal, we want children to be empowered and who will see their future with optimism. We want them to see that they can overcome their obstacles and still come out and change things."



Flintridge Prep students Jackson McHenry (left), Ali Preiss, Alina Okamoto, Lauren Guarino, Kristin Brisbois and Jason Bunn were Pasadena Independent Schools Foundation (PISF) members who visited Five Acres.



PISF President Jonathan Jaffrey (left), Five Acres Director of Philanthropy Cathy Clement, Susanna Hernandez and Five Acres Executive Director Bob Ketch.



Westridge students Sara Khan, Cassie Nufable, Catherine Berry, Julie McCrimlisk, Sheila Sitaram and Deanna Loh.



Chandler students (left) Alyssa Rivas, Koby Hayashi and Maxwell Liaw attended the Five Acres PISF visit.

About Five Acres

Children who are abused, abandoned and neglected are not afforded the same way of life that normal children enjoy. Five Acres in Altadena has been giving child's play back to the children it serves for 120 years.

Research and the agency's rich experience reveals that children of abuse must re-learn how to be children for they have experienced a kind of sensory deprivation that leaves them unable to relate and unwilling to trust.

For many, Five Acres becomes as close to home as they have ever had, and while the agency works ceaselessly at doing what it can, volunteers from the community complete the circle of rehabilitation as special friends, mentors and reading tutors. They bring the child the specialized one-on-one attention from non-professionals that translates into enormous progress in their therapeutic process and more rapid return to families or adoptive parents. Five Acres' mission would be incomplete without the loving unselfish commitment of volunteers.

For more information or to arrange a visit, call Director of Philanthropy Cathy Clement at (626) 798-6793, ext. 2251, or email at cclement@5acres.org. For a virtual tour, visit www.5acres.org. Founded in 1888, Five Acres is a child and family services agency providing therapeutic prevention, treatment and education programs to strengthen families and prevent child abuse.