•	D

m YES! I want to be a friend of the Foster Kids of the Merrimack Valley, Inc. by contributing \$

			check made payable to Foster Kids of the Merrimack Valley, Inc.	on my credit card account.		Exp. Date CCV	Signature	WWW.FOSTERKIDSMV.ORG
λ	AddressCity	PhoneEmail	have enclosed my check made payable to Foster	I would like to make a single gift of \$	Please charge my Uvisa MasterCard	Credit Card #	Print name of cardholder	Cut here and send with payment. Thank you!

### **OFFICERS:**

Larry F. Giordano, President Eileen F. Giordano, Vice President Kate Cook, Treasurer Kara Andrew, Secretary

### **DIRECTORS**:

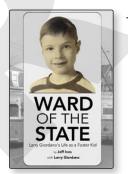
Matthew Fitzgerald Frank Graziano, CPA April Lyskowsky, Esq. Sarah Rastello Bonnie Sisson David Smith Susanne Spitale Lisa Waxman Arlene Willette

## **HONORARY DIRECTORS:**

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To learn more about Larry, read the best-selling

# WARD OF THE STATE

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## Foster Kids of the Merrimack Valley, Inc.

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Merrimack Valley Inc.

Because Every Kid Counts

Serving All Foster Children in the Merrimack Valley

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## •

# Larry F. Giordano

#### FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT

Larry Giordano is the President and Founder of Foster Kids of the Merrimack Valley, Inc., a non-profit organization created to support the growing needs of foster children in the Merrimack Valley region. Larry was raised as a foster child



after he was abandoned by his mother in a Springfield Hotel when he was five days old. He lived in a foster home until he was 17, at which time he entered the US Air Force. His years in foster care shaped the man Larry Gagnon became and as a tribute to his foster mother, he took her surname Giordano and became Larry Giordano. As a foster child himself, Larry knows the incredible value of community support to a child during their most impressionable years and it truly "takes a village". He was inspired by this great sense of community to create this organization to support foster children in the Merrimack Valley.

Today, Larry is a recognized leader in the Merrimack Valley with an exceptional resume of community service. He currently serves

# **Our Mission**

The Foster Kids of the Merrimack
Valley is dedicated to serving the
needs of foster children in the
Merrimack Valley with a goal to
bring a positive influence into their
lives and provide programs that
support the children as they grow.

as Kancho,
Master of
the Methuen
Karate
Association.
In previous
years he
served as
Methuen City
Councilor,

Massachusetts Commissioner of Public Safety, Methuen State Representative and Methuen Police Officer.



Founded in 2005, the Foster Kids of the Merrimack Valley, Inc. is a registered 501(c)3 non-profit organization, Tax ID 26-1347672. The mission of the organization is to serve the needs of foster children now in the care of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) in the Merrimack Valley, including Lawrence, Methuen, Andover, North Andover and Greater Haverhill. Our goal is to create programs and provide resources that will create a positive influence in their lives and support the children as they grow.

#### WHO ARE THE CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE?

Children in foster care are "just kids" who, through no fault of their own, have been removed from their parent/s due to abusive or neglectful circumstances. There are over 250,000 children in the United States entering the foster care system each year. More than one half of these children and families will receive services and return to their parents. However, the remainder will stay in foster care until they age out of the system. The stress of the trauma experienced by these children, along with family issues and unstable home lives, can have devastating effects. These foster children fall behind in school with just about half of them graduating from high school and only 2% nationally completing a bachelor's degree or beyond. The trauma these children have endured can follow them the rest of their lives. One in four foster kids is or has been homeless. Even now, over half of adults who are foster kids are unemployed. These statistics are alarming, and these children need our help now.

# **Special Programs**

## SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM (HELENE GIORDANO MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP)

A scholarship fund has been established for youth who are in the care of the Massachusetts Department of Children & Families (DCF) and are pursuing education at accredited institutions of higher learning. The Foster Kids of the Merrimack Valley will annually award two eligible students scholarships ranging up to \$2,500. Selection of recipients will be based upon their application and proven academic merit and financial need.

### ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY/SANTA'S HELPERS PROGRAM

Our hallmark event provides a memorable Christmas party for foster children in the Merrimack Valley, ages birth – 12. Through the generosity of Santa's Helpers, every child receives a bag of gifts from Santa, along with a pizza party, games, and more.

## PACK-IT-UP PROJECT

Foster children often use plastic bags when moving between homes. We supply duffle bags to help them make a more dignified transition. We collect new back packs filled with school supplies to ensure all our kids start the school year prepared for success.

# **Accepted Donations**

The Foster Kids of the Merrimack Valley, Inc. asks the community to help them make a difference by making a tax-deductible donation.

### **DONATIONS NEEDED INCLUDE:**

- Backpacks (new) with school supplies
- Gift Cards from local retail stores
- Duffle Bags (new) Books
- Cash Toys Games



