



Susan Francis

Susan Francis has served at-risk youth from underserved populations in the Desert since 1987 and has served as Chief Executive Officer of the John F. Kennedy Memorial Foundation (Healthy Family Foundation) since 2005. She has received numerous awards in recognition of her outstanding efforts to improve the quality of life and enhance programs and services for Coachella Valley children.

“Thank You to the Desert Outreach Foundation for your Valuable Children in Crisis Program”.

“**Healthy Family Foundation**” is dedicated to preventing child abuse and neglect and promoting health and wellness to children and families of Coachella Valley. Each year, we have received a generous donation of 60 to 80 Teddy Bears from the **Desert Outreach Foundation** to be distributed to children through our Home Visiting Programs. Home Visitors provide services to the families living in extremely high-risk home environments. Our services are called “Prevention Intervention” programs and directly serve families where there has been child abuse, neglect, substance abuse and domestic violence. Home Visitors provide parenting education, home safety, community resource referrals and goal setting to help a family improve their circumstances.

When considering the dire circumstances these families face, one wouldn’t expect the amazing difference a Teddy Bear can make. The result of giving these soft cuddly Teddy Bears to a child in that home environment is simply immeasurable and should not be underestimated. The Teddy Bear moment brightens up the entire environment. Often the bear is literally the only toy the child has. This small moment can be life changing; A Teddy Bear can bridge gaps, relax a tense situation, and have a positive effect on everyone present. The Teddy Bear becomes the vehicle for beginning the work of addressing the family’s most difficult issues.

In our experience, the Teddy Bears have a much deeper purpose than initially imagined. They become the metaphor of creating positive change in the family unit. The least of which is subliminally representing the philosophy of being gentle and kind (softer) to those we love.

You have no idea what a difference these bears can make.”

**Thank You,
Susan Francis**