

THE GATEPOST

THE NEWSLETTER OF SHEPHERD'S GATE

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Neglected and Hopeless

By Carol Patterson

Every child deserves to feel loved. Hopeful. Safe.

But that's not what the kids at Shepherd's Gate have experienced. Their childhoods have been so far from normal, it's hard to comprehend. Some of them have experienced more trauma by the age of 8 than most people experience in a lifetime. Their childhoods have been stolen from them by abuse, addiction and homelessness. They experienced the trauma of living homeless, living in a car, moving night after night fleeing from their abuser.

**Instead of love, they felt neglect.
Instead of safety, they felt fear.
Instead of stability, they felt insecurity.**

But as difficult as their stories are, it's important to read them. Because Deja and Leah are miracles. And I think you'll understand why God brings them to us to heal.

Turn the page and learn about their miraculous journey.

Carol ♡



Shepherd's
Gate

Deja's Story:

"We felt like no one cared about us."

Deja's parents were both alcoholics. They separated when Deja and her siblings were really young, so the kids would go back and forth between parents. But one thing was always the same at each house: neglect.

"When I was living at my mother's house, she would leave us at home by ourselves to go party and not leave food in the house. We were too young to be in the house by ourselves," Deja says.

At her dad's house, it wasn't much different. He would drink so much that he didn't know what was going on, which meant he didn't know that Deja was being sexually molested by a family member.

Deja grew up feeling unloved. Even as a young child, she felt depressed and alone.

"We felt like no one cared about us," she says.

"My mother would leave us at home by ourselves to go party..."



"I realized I didn't want to be alive anymore because everything was just so dark for me." -Deja

Leah's Story:

"Her father threatened to kill her."

Fear, trauma and insecurity were constants in Leah's childhood.

Because of her mother's struggle with addiction and alcoholism, Leah and her siblings never had a stable home. They were always moving from one living situation to the next. When they lived with her dad, Leah saw her father abuse her mother many times.

"Leah's father not only threatened to kill her

mom, he threatened to kill Leah and her siblings. He was yelling and screaming where the kids could hear," Carol, Shepherd's Gate CEO, says.

At school, Leah and her siblings would have outbursts and get into fights with other students, and even hit their teachers. Leah's younger brother was so traumatized that he began having speech problems.

Their mom was continuing the cycle of abuse, addiction and trauma that she had experienced as a child. And it looked like Leah and her siblings were going to perpetuate those cycles.

**Just like their mom, Deja
(read her story on page 2).**

"Leah's father not only threatened to kill her mom, he threatened to kill Leah and her siblings."

"My daughter was going to turn out exactly how I did, because that's exactly how I grew up." —Deja, Leah's mom



Deja and Leah: A Mother-Daughter Story

Yes, Deja and Leah are mother and daughter. Deja realized that unless she got help, her kids would be as scarred as she was. She was barely living, and it was impacting her kids. Thankfully, someone told her about Shepherd's Gate, and Deja and her children were able to come here.

Now, Deja is living a completely changed life. She completed life-skills classes, such as budgeting and parenting courses. She received counseling to help her process the trauma from her childhood.

Leah and her siblings received child specific care such as play therapy to help them begin healing. They flourished in the kids' program at Shepherd's Gate and were soon excelling at school. Now they're happy kids who have a bright future ahead of them!

Since graduating from Shepherd's Gate a few years ago, Deja has started her own business. She's giving back to help other women like her. She loves talking with the residents at Shepherd's Gate and encouraging them in their paths to recovery.

"I just want to thank all the volunteers, everybody who has given to this ministry. It helped me and my children, and we are so very grateful." –Deja



**Mother and Daughter, Deja and Leah,
are living a completely changed life.**

What Changed Lives Look Like



For some kids, the first time they get to celebrate holidays is at Shepherd's Gate.



Deja's children are now thriving! They are happy, healthy and doing well at school thanks to friends like you.



Because of partners like you, kids get everything they need at Shepherd's Gate: meals, clothes and even toys.



Knowing they are safe and cared for is vital for kids to be able to start healing.

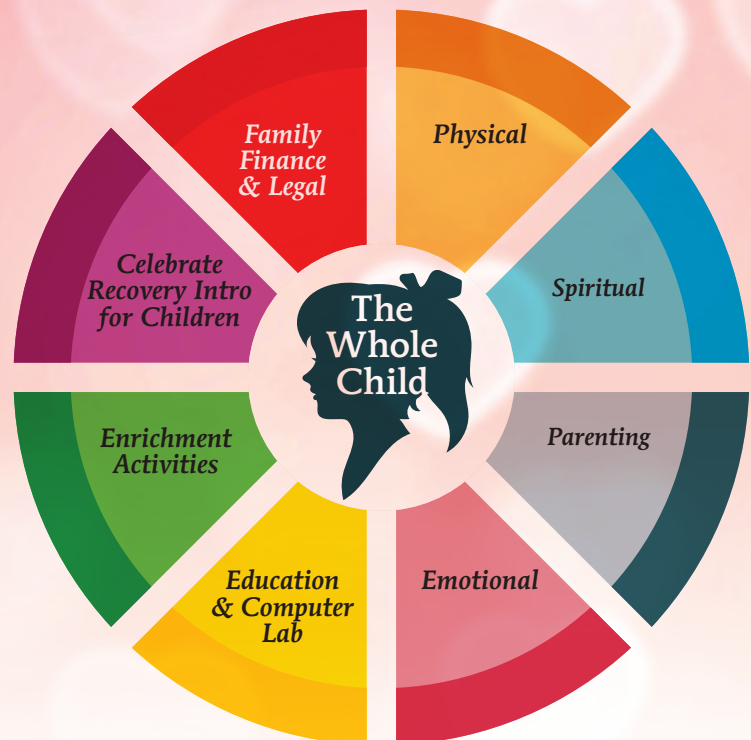


Many of our kids have lived in foster care. Courts work with us to reunite families and help moms live changed lives.



Through Shepherd's Gate, kids get play therapy, outside counseling and childcare while their moms work on their recovery.

The whole child program provides necessary help for all areas of a child's recovery and healing. To find out more about the children's program at Shepherd's Gate, go to: shepherds gate.org/children





Double Your Impact

Without caring partners like you, Deja's kids would have been destined to continue the cycles of addiction and homelessness. Just like Deja did. But through the children's program at Shepherd's Gate and the support of partners like you, they have a bright future ahead of them.

And today, because of the matching gift opportunity, your gift can have an even bigger impact on children's lives!

Each gift you give will be matched up \$10,000, so your gift will provide shelter, child-specific care, and to enhance a child's learning abilities. Your gift will now go twice as far!

Because of you, kids like Leah will not fall behind in school and will have access to counseling, play therapy and more, all while in a loving, safe environment with their mom. Families are healing and lives are changing – all thanks to friends like you!



Online gifts will be matched as well at:
shepherds gate.org/give



Brentwood: 605 Sycamore Ave. Brentwood, CA 94513 | **Livermore:** 1660 Portola Ave. Livermore, CA 94551
shepherds gate.org | shepgate@shepherds gate.org | Brentwood 925.308.7507 | Livermore 925.443.4283

For over 35 years, Shepherd's Gate has served women and children trapped in abuse, addiction and homelessness. Our mission is to provide safe refuge, restore hope and dignity, and rebuild lives through the transforming power of Jesus Christ.

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