



# FEEDING THE FOSTERS

BY SAMANTHA AND LAURA KOPEC

Growing up in an Italian household, food was always a symbol of love. Our grandparents made sure that we'd never go hungry. They served home-cooked meals, and we ate. Every holiday, celebration, and event was centered around the meal. The family ate together. We always gathered at the table, prayed, and talked about our daily happenings. Everyone shared their high points and low points of the day. We listened to each other and supported one another while enjoying a meal.

These two traditions are missing in so many homes today. One way we could improve the foster care system is by helping the foster families get back to the rituals of family mealtime. This mission of Feeding the Fosters would alleviate some of the financial burdens on the household. Allowing adults to spend quality time with the children instead of grocery shopping and daily meal preparation. Enjoying a hot, nutritious supper delivered at mealtime is a welcomed gift to any family. It also provides the gift of time spent together in food and fellowship; time to communicate and share with each other.

My sister and I began our mission by cooking weekly for the Florida Sheriff's Youth Ranch in Safety Harbor over the summer. We delivered homemade and piping hot baked ziti, meatballs, and shepherd's pie at supper time. This summer we decided to invite our local friends to help us with the

## About the Founders:

Samantha (15 years old) and Laura (14 years old) attend Tarpon Springs High School Leadership Conservatory for the Arts. They both agree that their mission is to make a difference in the lives of foster families, encourage others to volunteer and be the change they want to see in this world.

mission of Feeding the Fosters. We created a Facebook page where many people signed up to cook and provide a meal. More surprisingly, many foster families asked if they could be included in receiving dinner. In the past two months, we have grown to service seven private foster families and two Safety Harbor group homes for a total of over sixty individual meals per night. We even applied for and received a nonprofit status making all donations tax-deductible.

Community outpouring and generosity of support has been overwhelming and very much appreciated. The foster children have enjoyed the variety of different foods, and their caretakers are grateful for the extra time they can dedicate to the kids, without worrying about preparing a meal. **So will you please join us in Feeding the Fosters? Find out how to support our work by contacting 727-204-6009.**

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*Ready for Life provides support, resources and guidance former foster care youth need to successfully transition to adulthood.*

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Changing Lives Beyond Foster Care

To get involved, contact Kathy Mize  
 kmize@readyforlifepinellas.org  
 or call (727) 954-3989 ext. 222