

silicon valley
gives

May 6, 2014



Telling Your Story

Charlie McCollum



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FOSTERING HOPE



BY SUSANO MERCURY NEWS

Amanda Madrid, right, found a worthy foster parent in Wendy Stegeman of Milpitas, who encouraged her educational pursuits.

After abusive early childhood and rebellious teenage years, former foster child flourishes

By Joe Rodriguez

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Amanda Madrid may be only 22, but she's waited a lifetime for a view of the world few young women like her ever get.

"It's peaceful, even on a cloudy day like this," she said from a vista point at Cal State East Bay, a campus built in the Hayward hills. "When I came here, I felt for the first time in my life that I was exactly where I should be."

Before college, she struggled in foster

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Wish Book proves valley's spirit of giving

Welcome to the 28th edition of the Mercury News Wish Book. During the next few weeks, our reporters and photographers will introduce you to individuals and families who face significant challenges. Each has a wish you can help come true.

Since 1983, readers have donated more than \$6.5 million to provide everything

dollar you give helps people right here at home.

For the first time in many years, these stories will be published without the guidance of Holly Hayes, who led the Wish Book for more than a decade and who passed away in April. The Mercury News is committed to maintaining the Wish Book legacy, and so this summer

the Wish Book coordinator.

We hope this year's stories will inspire you to give generously. Tax-deductible contributions in any amount are welcome. Donations may be made by check or credit card, by mail or online at www.mercurynews.info/wishbook.

Thank you, and happy holidays.

Trying to put all the pieces back together



PATRICK TOMPA/MERCURY NEWS

Valerie and Steve Whitehill, of Cupertino, both survived their cancers but lost their landscaping business.

Battles against brain tumor, breast cancer destroy family business

By Sean Webby

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The gold-framed picture of how things used to be shows the Whitehills, Steve and Valerie and their three kids, standing side by side on a beach, bathed in sunshine and success.

Seven years later, it hangs near a

him in the professionally shot photograph, was soon to suffer her own blow.

In the wake of what has happened, Steve and Valerie's successful business, Whitehill Landscaping, has withered away. Their savings are barren, depleted by medical costs. They are unable to pay for the services that can restrain Steve to brush his teeth, rest his head when

wishbookseries

The Wish Book is an annual project of the Mercury News that invites readers to help their neighbors.

howtogive

A chance to be a kid



PATRICK TEHAN/STAFF PHOTOS

Christian Van Nuland, 2, gets help Tuesday from his older brother Chris, while using steppingstones at Happy Hollow Park & Zoo in San Jose. The younger Van Nuland suffers from heart problems.

Program gives Happy Hollow passes to children with developmental issues

By Charlie Mc Collum
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Christian Van Nuland seems like a normal 2-year-old kid.



wishbookseries

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Framing Your Story

- Decide on the message.
- Find the people.
- Check on the person or persons you think will tell the story.
- You are a reporter.
- Think photos.



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Writing Your Story

- Get to the point; keep it short.
- Find a balance of emotion and facts.
- Be a storyteller.
- Keep the tone conversational. Avoid jargon.
- Write it once, then write it again.
- Proofread it, then have someone else proofread it.

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