

## 'A WHOLE FAMILY THING'

### San Marcos High Club helps out foster parents and children

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Foster parents and children of Santa Barbara County can rely on a certain San Marcos High School club: the Resource Family Association Student Support Team.

English teacher Frank Koroshec founded RFASSST in 2015. The club that now has 100 members began out of Mr. Koroshec's English class. For Mr. Koroshec, stories are the most powerful tool to teach English, and his goal was to get his students "thinking about perspectives."

As a parent who has adopted two children, Mr. Koroshec sparked conversations about perspectives in the foster care world. "We began to brainstorm what would be useful for families," he said.

The curiosity of the class grew and the students wanted to learn more and serve. So, RFASSST was born. The club started out with 25 members and grew over the four years. With the increase in membership, the goal of the club remains the same.

"It's a club that promotes others to think about different perspectives," said Mr. Koroshec. Currently, the club's membership includes more girls than boys, but both the founder and the president want to attract more boys to step up.

For example, RFASSST President Jacqueline Moreno made sure her boyfriend was there at the club events, which brought even more boys to sign up, Mr. Koroshec said. Mr. Koroshec is proud of being a male running the club.

"It would go to counter gender roles," he said, because "raising a child is a whole family thing."

Mr. Koroshec, who's been teaching at San Marcos for about a decade, hopes to encourage his students to "become conscious of people that are living in circumstances that might be different from themselves."

One way RFASSST does that is by holding events like Parents' Night Out, where parents from foster or resource families drop off their children with the members, who will provide child care and bond with the kids. The club has mental health clinicians from Child Abuse Listening and Mediation come in to supervise the events. RFASSST has held six of these events so far, and the next one is schedule for this coming fall.

The events seem to be effective in connecting members with those who grew up in different circumstances from them. Jacqueline told the News-Press that she plans on adopting children when the time comes for her to start a family.

The funding for the club and its events come from San Marcos High School's Royal Pride Foundation, which has granted the club with \$3,500, and nonprofit organization Kids Helping Kids, which has contributed \$12,000.

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RFASSST students enjoy an outing at Lane Farms.

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