

Odd Fellow - Rebekah Children's Home A Haven for Children Since 1897

One of the tenets of Odd Fellowship is the care of widows and orphans, and how appropriate it was that an Odd Fellows Orphans Home was established in California. The Odd Fellow - Rebekah Children's Home of California in Gilroy was founded as an orphanage for children related to Odd Fellows and Rebekahs. The home, located in Gilroy, California, dates back to 1896, when the Grand Lodge of California granted a charter to the Rebekah Assembly for the purpose of establishing an orphanage.

Caroline Hoxett, a prominent Gilroy resident, donated the land where the Children's Home still stands. When the original home opened on October 27, 1897, with 14 children in residence, Sister Hoxett was the first board president, and a few years later, in 1900-1901, she became president of the Rebekah Assembly of California. The first home, a large wooden structure, was constructed at a cost of about \$12,000.

The ceremony of Laying the Cornerstone took place, Saturday, May 8, 1897, and it was no doubt the first instance in the history of the Order that such a ceremony was conducted by Rebekahs. In fact it could have been the first time any woman's organization laid a cornerstone. Marian Greenwood of Stockton was Rebekah Assembly President during the ceremony. Grand Master at that time was John Walter Warboys of Santa Rosa.

Because of serious fire and earthquake concerns with the original wooden structure, California Rebekahs decided to build what is now the current Administrative building. Designed by well

known California architect, William H. Weeks, the 45,000 sq. ft., steel reinforced concrete building was dedicated October 9, 1921, at a cost of \$165,000.

The current Children's Home

Children's Home Mission Statement

Rebekah Children's Services' Mission continues to be "Dedicated to promoting social, emotional and physical well being of children".

administration building was constructed in 1921. Residents in the Home increased through the years until it reached a peak of over 100 children. Enrollment stayed high during the depression years, but then it started to drop and eventually leveled off with 40 residents.

In 1922 an "Endowment Fund" was created with \$10,000 left over from

the "New Home Fund". The revenue from this fund now provides for nearly 20% of the home's operating costs, and it currently totals nearly \$12 million and generates more than \$600,000 annually for the \$4.7 million budget to operate the facility.

In the early 1960's a nationwide trend of placing orphaned children in foster homes decreased the Home's enrollment. Orphanages across the nation closed their doors. The Odd Fellow-Rebekah

Children's Home in Gilroy is the only Order related agency of its kind left in the United States or Canada. California Odd Fellows and Rebekahs rose to the occasion and revised services at the Home to meet changing needs of children and families, initially as a treatment center for

emotionally disturbed children.

The 1921 facility housed children until April of 1993. It now contains administrative offices, the main kitchen/dining facilities, a Santa Clara County Office of

A typical child in our on-site residence MARISOL



Marisol's childhood had been a living nightmare. She was neglected by her mother and sexually molested by her mother's male visitors. Her innocence destroyed, Marisol trusts no one, especially not adults, and she has no friends. If she is to have hope for a more natural life, Marisol will need intensive therapeutic counseling. For Marisol and thousands of children like her, the Home is often a last chance to find the love and nurturing they need.

