



A Vignette by CARS

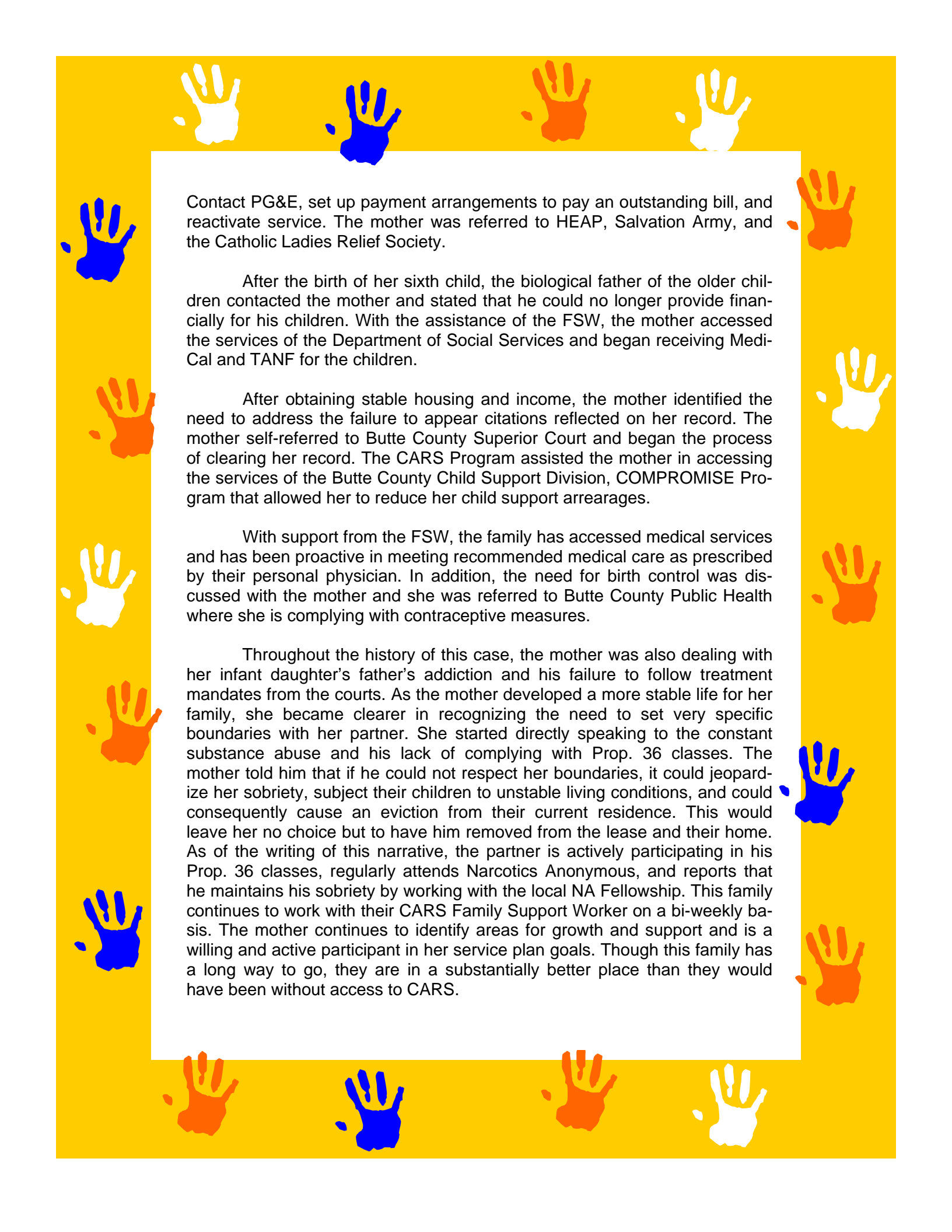
The C family was referred to the CARS Program with substandard housing, an unstable family environment, and substance abuse issues in December 2004. At the time of intake, the mother was 8 1/2 months pregnant and actively participating in Touchstone services, Level 2. The family originally consisted of a 29-year-old female, her 38-year-old male partner, a two-year-old girl, and a five-month-old girl. After the biological father of her older three children (an 11-year-old girl, a 12-year-old boy, and 13-year-old boy) was evicted from his residence, the mother brought these children into her home as well.

When the CARS Program began working with this family, they were residing in a motor home that was parked on a friend's property. The motor home was without insulation, wall coverings, cooking area, a functioning bathroom, and did not provide adequate space for the family's needs. The owner of the property was not receptive to outside agencies visiting with this family and as a result requested that the family vacate the property. Prior to living in this trailer, the family had been homeless for approximately three years.

With the return of homelessness, looming on the horizon the family identified such needs as housing, medical care for the children, legal aid to address numerous failure to appear citations, assistance with reducing child support arrearages, and public assistance for the children to address with our Family Support Worker (FSW).

After securing a temporary residence with other family members and completing an application for homeless assistance the mother was told that her contribution of money to her relative's household (even though provisionally) meant that she was no longer homeless. The FSW provided an active linkage to the Oroville Rescue Mission to address emergency housing needs where they stayed for a few days and then moved to a campsite at a local state park. The FSW advocated for the family to the Landlady Property Management Company (LPM) for housing. Because of the family's involvement with services and the advocacy of the program, the LPM held an apartment for approximately two months while the family stayed with friends and in the campgrounds to save money for the initial deposit and first months rent. The mother was able to save approximately \$1000 of her own and was provided cash assistance for \$225.00 for moving expenses by the CARS program.

As the FSW continued to work with the mother, she was able to



Contact PG&E, set up payment arrangements to pay an outstanding bill, and reactivate service. The mother was referred to HEAP, Salvation Army, and the Catholic Ladies Relief Society.

After the birth of her sixth child, the biological father of the older children contacted the mother and stated that he could no longer provide financially for his children. With the assistance of the FSW, the mother accessed the services of the Department of Social Services and began receiving Medi-Cal and TANF for the children.

After obtaining stable housing and income, the mother identified the need to address the failure to appear citations reflected on her record. The mother self-referred to Butte County Superior Court and began the process of clearing her record. The CARS Program assisted the mother in accessing the services of the Butte County Child Support Division, COMPROMISE Program that allowed her to reduce her child support arrearages.

With support from the FSW, the family has accessed medical services and has been proactive in meeting recommended medical care as prescribed by their personal physician. In addition, the need for birth control was discussed with the mother and she was referred to Butte County Public Health where she is complying with contraceptive measures.

Throughout the history of this case, the mother was also dealing with her infant daughter's father's addiction and his failure to follow treatment mandates from the courts. As the mother developed a more stable life for her family, she became clearer in recognizing the need to set very specific boundaries with her partner. She started directly speaking to the constant substance abuse and his lack of complying with Prop. 36 classes. The mother told him that if he could not respect her boundaries, it could jeopardize her sobriety, subject their children to unstable living conditions, and could consequently cause an eviction from their current residence. This would leave her no choice but to have him removed from the lease and their home. As of the writing of this narrative, the partner is actively participating in his Prop. 36 classes, regularly attends Narcotics Anonymous, and reports that he maintains his sobriety by working with the local NA Fellowship. This family continues to work with their CARS Family Support Worker on a bi-weekly basis. The mother continues to identify areas for growth and support and is a willing and active participant in her service plan goals. Though this family has a long way to go, they are in a substantially better place than they would have been without access to CARS.