



David Bejarano, Connie Hernandez (with baby), and Rachel Humphreys

La Cuna

Plenty of foster kids in San Diego are in desperate need of a good home, but Rachel Humphreys noticed that one group in the system was particularly underserved: Latinos. Five years ago, she founded La Cuna, which means "the crib," a North Park-based nonprofit dedicated to placing Latino children and encouraging Latino adults to step up and foster. La Cuna recently found a family for its 50th child.

"There are some 800 Latino children in need of a home on any given day," Humphreys says. "There's a silent crisis on our hands with babies in San Diego. People love babies, but hundreds go without a decent home."

La Cuna partners with a private screening company to conduct psychological evaluations of potential foster parents, who may be married or single. They weed out people who are in it for the money — a common problem in the foster care system (the county provides a small monthly stipend for each child fostered).

"We'll take any loving family," says Humphreys, who places children from infants to five years old. It's during these earliest years that kids need lots of love and support for healthy development. After screening, La Cuna educates the foster parents and supports them as they adjust to their new roles. The last part of La Cuna's mission is to become a visible presence among the county's large Latino population.

"We're getting the word out that a lot of Latinos are stepping up to the plate." (619/521-9900, www.lacuna.org) — AnnaMaria Stephens, photo by Vincent Knakal