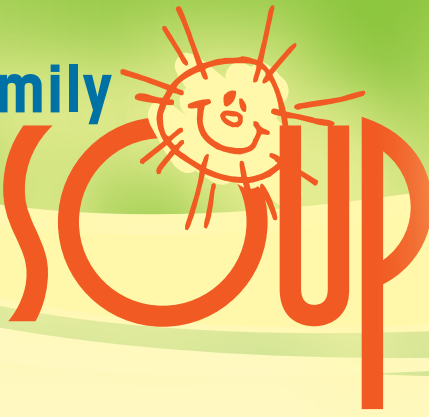


family



Winter/Spring 2023

# Noise!

Making a Difference Together  
for Children with special Needs

## Powers, Passion and Penmanship:

A Behind the Scenes Look at the Real Life SuperCaptainBraveMan



*SuperCaptainBraveMan Book 5: The Hero Inside was donated to the Family SOUP Library by Marc Laver of "Jonnie and Friends Reach For the Stars." Marc is pictured here sharing the book with our library.*

Look up in the sky. It's a bird. It's a plane. It's Kyle, the protagonist of and inspiration for the "SuperCaptainBraveMan" series who, with every page, shows us that bravery and superpowers are not just relegated to mythic heroes and heroines. For more information about the "SuperCaptainBraveMan" series, please refer to our "In Our Library" section of the Newsletter. This article

seeks to dive beneath the cape of SuperCaptainBraveMan to find out more about Kyle and his parents, Jennifer and Paul Norman: the brave child and brave family that started it all.

We cannot begin to talk about SuperCaptainBraveMan without first learning about Kyle, the courageous young man who inspired such a powerful series. We had the pleasure of conducting a short interview with Jennifer Norman, the mother of the fictional and real life SuperCaptainBraveMan, who is a hero in her own right. From her, we first heard of Kyle's story. Kyle Norman was born a seemingly healthy baby. However, once he reached the age of two, Kyle fell ill and was diagnosed with Mitochondrial Disease: a disease that causes the energy-producing structures within the cell to malfunction. Jennifer stated that Kyle's prognosis was not a promising one, saying, "He wasn't expected to make it past three years old. The prognosis was very bleak. But fortunately, in holding out for hope and really staying positive and with a lot of prayer, Kyle started to come through." Despite such events of adversity and with the help, love, advocacy and support from his family and medical team, Kyle is now sixteen years old, participates in

### ...COVER STORY CONTINUED:

a homeschool program and conquers everyday by enjoying his life to the fullest. You might find him near the ocean or a local outdoor water fountain, listening to the calming sounds of the flowing water, listening to a book, or jamming out to a playlist or live music performed by one of his nurses. Kyle was first given the moniker SuperCaptainBraveMan at a young age. Though his ability to express himself was limited, his parents realized the sheer power that his presence exuded to those around him, becoming a prime example that it doesn't take physical mobility to move people the most.

We next wanted to understand the mission of the SuperCaptainBraveMan book series. Jennifer shared with us her observations that were made on outings to the park with Kyle. She would observe the curiosity of children when they would look at his ventilator, asking questions in hushed voices to their parents to the effect of "What's wrong with him?". She would also observe the looks of sadness and, in the case of the questions, embarrassment, that would cross the faces of the parents when they would see Kyle. Thus, armed with these observations and the knowledge of the effects of Kyle's own personal power, they began to forge an idea. Kyle's parents wished to find a way to introduce and educate children about the different types of disabilities that people might

live their lives with, as well as some of the day-to-day situations that they may face. They seek to begin this education and understanding from a young age, thereby simultaneously banishing fear and stigma, and bringing more inclusivity in to the world. Jennifer expressed, "It's our goal to have a SuperCaptainBraveMan book in every school, every home, every hospital and every clinic." With every copy sold, SuperCaptainBraveMan is that much closer to the completion of his mission. The series has even garnered the attention of such celebrities as Cher and Samuel L. Jackson.

Superpowers are often thought to be only for those fighting crime between the pages of a comic book or throwing cars while engaged in combat with terrifying monsters on the silver screen. But take a little boy faced with overwhelming odds, add in tidal waves of love and passion from an amazing family along with a substantial amount of dreams and hope for a better world, and it will result in a recipe for a superpower that effortlessly blows Superman out of the water. With your family as your voice and your message and ability to inspire as your armaments, fly high and soar far SuperCaptainBraveMan. And from all of your fans, thank you for helping to awaken the superhero in all of us.



## President's Message by Kimberly Butcher

In my work as an early childhood educator, I have had the opportunity to help design and administer two commingled preschool classrooms. We discovered great benefits for both typically developing children and children with special needs. Children are great observers, and they learn by watching and modeling the behavior and skills of those around them. Playing together is a great way to expand the development of all children. We found that our typically developing children developed sensitivity and empathy for their peers, even more so than in a general education preschool setting.

Research over the last 30 years confirms that inclusion benefits both children with and without disabilities. A misconception about inclusion is that adult attention provided to children with needs will take

away from the typical peer's experience, when in fact research indicates that typically developing children make similar developmental gains in regular and inclusive preschools (Odom, DeKlyen, & Jenkins, 1984, Strain & Bovey, 2011). Active engagement in classroom activities is a strong indication of learning and typically developing children actively engage in inclusive settings (Brown et al., 1999). Most importantly, children learn to develop friendships with a variety of peers.

Family SOUP actively engages children in programs and activities based on the community needs of children in special education and their families. As we reflect on best practice and the importance of the "least restrictive" environment, I think we must look at the benefits of commingling typically developing children and those with special needs. We also need to encourage families of children with special needs to seek opportunities for their children that provide play time and ample social interactions with their typically developing peers.

We encourage parents to advocate for the least restrictive learning environments during the school day, but are we doing all that we can to collaborate and to increase the opportunities that children have after the final bell rings? All children can teach and learn when given the opportunity. Quality moments to engage with typically developing peers should not be limited to the parameters of a child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

In the coming months, those of us on the Family SOUP program committee will be exploring ways to increase our ability to weave inclusion into the programs we offer. We welcome your ideas and thoughts. Please provide input to [Leanne@FamilySoup.org](mailto:Leanne@FamilySoup.org) or (530) 751-1925 ext. 110.

*Kimberly A. Butcher*

# “Colin’s Corner”

## Brings Sensory Play Area to Yuba City’s Maple Park in Honor of Colin Boyd

A community need combined with a mother’s passion has brought about an exciting project to help children in our area have an inclusive play opportunity. This play opportunity, “Colin’s Corner”, will be a sensory play area that will be included as part of the \$100,000 Maple Park Renovation Project in Yuba City. The sensory play area will be a fenced area that is dedicated for sensory play. According to Brad McIntire, Community Services Director for the City of Yuba City, the area will have one exit and one entrance, and be fully fenced with benches surrounding the exit and entrance. This will allow children to have independent playtime at the park while also allowing for a measure of safety for those who may have a tendency for elopement.

The idea for the sensory play area came from Yuba City mom, Caitlin Boyd. When Caitlin and her family bought a house across the street from Maple Park, it seemed like a wonderful opportunity to have a playground so close by. However, the family soon found out that the playground was not very accessible for

their son, Colin. Colin, who had autism, also had cancer on his hip which caused him limited mobility. It was due to this decreased mobility that Caitlin realized just how inaccessible the park was for children with special needs. Fueled by the desire to make a difference for children with special needs in our area, Caitlin set off on a mission to create change in her own backyard.



She says, *“As a special needs mom I craved a sense of normalcy without having to worry about issues of eloping or getting hurt. I just wanted the feeling of being able to go to a playground and relax and let him feel like a ‘normal’ kid without having to hover.”*

Determined, Caitlin started by reaching out to other moms on a local mom’s group page on Facebook, where she was directed to the office of Brad McIntire. She relates, *“I reached out to Brad and wanted to learn how to make Maple Park more accessible. While talking to him, I learned that the park was already on the calendar to be renovated.”*

McIntire welcomed Caitlin’s input and gave

her catalogues of playground equipment to look through so that she could be involved in the decision-making process for the park renovation. Caitlin recalls that together, she and Brad talked about what kids with autism might want or need to have a fun and successful visit to the playground. Caitlin even spoke with Colin’s ABA therapist to get ideas on what features might be of benefit to children with autism.

Caitlin said that it wasn’t until she received a rough draft of the playground that she realized the Maple Park Renovation Project would include the fully fenced sensory corner, which is even more than she had hoped for. Caitlin shared that the family lost Colin in his battle with cancer in January 2022. In March 2022 Caitlin got word that the Maple Park sensory corner would be named “Colin’s Corner” in honor of her son. Caitlin says that our community can help honor Colin’s memory by simply *“using the playground and just coming out and enjoying it.”*

Brad McIntire said that he envisions that the sensory area will be of great benefit to the special needs community in our area. He said, *“I envision that it will get a lot of use and be something special and unique to the City of Yuba City.”* He adds, *“As we move along in the city, we need to add more accessibility components to the city parks.”*

Caitlin believes that the Maple Park will give families of children with special needs, *“something that other families don’t have to give a second thought to.”* And allow children with special needs to *“Just feel like a kid... not feel different”.*

The Maple Park Renovation Project and “Colin’s Corner” Sensory Play Area are tentatively set to break ground in March 2023. Follow us on Facebook at [facebook.com/FamilySOUPYubaCity](https://www.facebook.com/FamilySOUPYubaCity), as we will post updates on the park’s progress and opening dates.



# family SOUP

## CALENDAR

### WINTER/SPRING 2023

#### ACTIVITIES & SUPPORT GROUPS

##### Sensory Play Group (Virtual)

Explore the world in a sensory-minded way during this interactive group for children ages 0-5 with special needs. Supplies will be provided for hands-on sensory activities that you and your child get to enjoy together at home. This session we will be focusing on numbers 1-10. We will explore them through monthly themes and sensory activities. Open to Sutter County children ages 0-5 with special needs. First Thursday of each month 5:45-6:30 pm. Spring Dates: 2/2- Numbers 1-2 and "Farm Train", 3/2- Numbers 3-4 and "Things that Grow", 4/6- Numbers 5-6 "Things that Go", 5/4- Numbers 7-8 and "BAA-BAA, Balls", 6/1- Numbers 9-10 and "Pups and Cups". Registration begins 12/20/22. Limited to the first 30 participants.

Register at [tinyurl.com/SensoryPlayFS](https://tinyurl.com/SensoryPlayFS) or contact [Leanne@familysoup.org](mailto:Leanne@familysoup.org) (530) 751-1925 ext. 110.

##### Lego Club (Virtual)

Join us virtually for a fun club geared towards Lego creators. Meets monthly for fun STEM and problem-solving challenges designed to get the creativity flowing. All supplies provided and delivered to your door, and Lego starter kits provided for new participants. For children with special needs in Yuba, Sutter and Colusa Counties ages 3-22. Second Thursday of each month 5:45-6:30 pm Spring Dates: 2/9- Zipline Challenge, 3/9- Candy Dispenser Designer, 4/13- Nest Necessities, 5/11- Make it Glow Challenge. Registration begins 12/20/22. Limited to the first 30 participants.

Register at [tinyurl.com/FS-LEGOCLUB](https://tinyurl.com/FS-LEGOCLUB) or contact [Leanne@familysoup.org](mailto:Leanne@familysoup.org) (530) 751-1925 ext. 110.

##### Scrapbooking Support Group (Virtual)

Virtual monthly support group for parents and caregivers of children with special needs! Come craft and chat with others who understand. Supplies are free and delivered to your home prior to the zoom event. Third Wednesday of each month 6-7 pm. Spring Dates: 1/18, 2/15, 3/15, 4/19, 5/17, 6/21

Register at [tinyurl.com/FS-Scrapbooking](https://tinyurl.com/FS-Scrapbooking) or contact [Leanne@familysoup.org](mailto:Leanne@familysoup.org) (530) 751-1925 ext. 110.

##### Sibling Support Group (In-person + Virtual)

Monthly group supporting the unique perspectives and needs of siblings of children with special needs. Group will host 3 virtual events and 1 in-person event. All supplies included and delivered to your door. For siblings of children with special needs. Third Thursday of each month 5:45-6:30 pm. Spring dates: 2/16- Ninja Stress Balls, March- In-person event TBA, 4/20- Taped Canvas Art, 5/18- Claymation Creations.

Registration begins 12/20/22, Limited to the first 30 participants. Register at [tinyurl.com/SiblingSupportFS](https://tinyurl.com/SiblingSupportFS) or contact [Leanne@familysoup.org](mailto:Leanne@familysoup.org) (530) 751-1925 ext. 110.

##### Mornings in the Garden (In-person)

Join us for a fun morning at the Artisan Community Garden with hands-on activities with fellow families. Open to families of children with special needs and their friends. Activities for all ages. Fourth Saturday of each month 10-11 am. Spring Dates: 4/29- Nature Science, 5/27- Salsa-Making Fiesta, 6/24- Music in the Garden, 7/22-Water Play Day, 8/27- Art in the Garden, 9/24- Fall Fun.

Register at: [tinyurl.com/MorningsInTheGarden23](https://tinyurl.com/MorningsInTheGarden23) or contact [Leanne@familysoup.org](mailto:Leanne@familysoup.org) (530) 751-1925 ext. 110.

##### PALS (Virtual + In-person)

Join us as we play, learn and explore the world together while making friendships and having fun. Each month, a kit of hands-on supplies will be provided so that you can play along with us via zoom. Third Friday of each month, 10-10:45 am. Open to families with children 0-5 years old with special needs living in Yuba, Sutter and Colusa Counties. Spring Dates: 1/20, 2/17, 3/17, 4/21, 5/26, 6/16.

Register at [tinyurl.com/PALSplay22-23](https://tinyurl.com/PALSplay22-23) or contact Erin Gladden at 530-749-4049.

##### TEEM-G Gardening Life Skills Class (In-Person)

Join us for a 6-week program at the Artisan Community Garden. We will learn how to grow, tend, harvest fruits and vegetables, and learn how to use our harvest to cook healthy meals. Open to teens aged 13-17 years old.

Register at [tinyurl.com/TEEMG](https://tinyurl.com/TEEMG) or contact Travis at (530) 751-1925 ext. 103 or [Travis@familysoup.org](mailto:Travis@familysoup.org).

#### WORKSHOPS & TRAINING

##### Supporting Student Attendance with SCSOS & Sutter Co. Probation

February 9th, 10-11 am via zoom. Virtual workshop supporting parents of children who are struggling with school attendance and truancy. Learn more about the SARB process, what school attendance expectations are, reducing barriers to student attendance, supports that are available to help students with attendance success and proactive tips and tricks for helping students reach their attendance goals. Workshop will be presented by Denae Rollins, SCSOS Social Emotional Learning Coordinator and Meagan Hammond, Supervising Probation Officer with Sutter County Probation.

Can't make the live workshop? You can still register and will receive a link to the recording! Register at <https://tinyurl.com/FSSpringWorkshop1> or contact [Leanne@familysoup.org](mailto:Leanne@familysoup.org) (530) 751-1925 ext. 110.

##### "At Risk Citizens" Program with YCPD

March 9TH, 10- 11 am via zoom. Virtual workshop to learn more about Yuba City Police Department's ARC Program. This is a program designed to help police officers more easily identify and return missing family members with autism or other impairments which may cause them to elope, get lost easily and/or have communication barriers with police officers in the community. This workshop will connect parents or guardians with YCPD Community Policing Coordinator, Drew Mitchell, to learn more about how the ARC program can keep their children safe as well as learn what to do if your child is missing.

Register at [tinyurl.com/FSWorkshopARC](https://tinyurl.com/FSWorkshopARC) or contact [Leanne@familysoup.org](mailto:Leanne@familysoup.org) or (530) 751-1925 ext. 110.

#### SPECIAL EVENTS

##### Gray Lodge Family Nature Walk

Feb 11th, 10- 11:30 am at 3207 Rutherford Road, Gridley. Join us as we observe the snow geese migration and other nature sightings during a Family SOUP nature walk at Gray Lodge. We will be walking along the .6-mile Wetlands Discovery Trail, which is fully paved and wheelchair accessible, including a sloped ramp to the elevated wildlife viewing platform. We will meet at parking lot #14 and take the walk together. A naturalist from Gray Lodge will meet us on the viewing platform to share some information about the area and answer any questions. Bring a picnic or snacks and enjoy scenic views and chatting with other families after the walk.

There is a parking fee of \$4.50 for attendees 16 and over; children under 16 attends for free. Fee payment is cash only. Register at [tinyurl.com/GrayLodgeHikeFS](https://tinyurl.com/GrayLodgeHikeFS) or by contacting [Leanne@familysoup.org](mailto:Leanne@familysoup.org) or (530) 751-1925 ext. 110.



##### 2023 Bistro in the Buttes- May 13th

Save the date for this special event that is Family SOUP's biggest fundraiser event of the year! Enjoy a lovely dinner at an intimate setting nestled in the historic Sutter Buttes. Enjoy raffle prizes, live music, and auction.

For more information or to volunteer, contact [Adrienne@familysoup.org](mailto:Adrienne@familysoup.org)

##### 2023 Yuba Sutter Walk 'N' Roll for Disability Awareness

May 20th. Join us as we Walk 'N' Roll around Geweke Field in Yuba City to help create disability awareness in our area. Stay for the Yuba Sutter Colusa United Way's Resource Fair at the adjacent Sam Brannan Park. Preregistration information will be available soon.

Please contact [Adrienne@familysoup.org](mailto:Adrienne@familysoup.org) for sponsorship opportunities.



## Meet Our **Community Partners:** Amber Milner with the Artisan Community Garden

The Artisan Community Garden is a community oasis within the Yuba-Sutter Area. Located adjacent to the Sutter County Museum, the Artisan Community Garden provides a space within the city for growing and cultivating friendships, education, community pride, and of course... fruits and vegetables. When first walking into the garden you will be met by an arch of growing vines and find beauty and nature in every corner of the space. From a wall of sunflowers to a flowerbed of cacti, a sensory herb garden and hands-on exploration stations for children of all ages, the garden provides a little something for everyone. The garden also hosts many large planter boxes that have been adopted by community groups, including a box dedicated for use by Family SOUP.

Amber Milner, lead volunteer and project founder, says of the space, "We believe in a place that is wholly inclusive where anyone can come to volunteer, learn about gardening, connect socially, relax in a peaceful setting, and give back to the community. All are welcome."

The community garden has partnered with many local organizations to allow them to use the space. Amber and the garden have been gracious to allow Family SOUP to continue to hold our "Mornings in the Garden" events in their space this upcoming April-September. Family SOUP will also be hosting a 6-week gardening life

skills class for our TEEM-G Group at the garden this spring/summer.

Amber shares that this is all part of her and the garden's mission, saying, "Our mission is to create and maintain a sustainable community garden that will produce nourishing food, provide educational resources on healthy living and foster a culture of social responsibility, all while promoting community togetherness."

The Artisan Community Garden operates as a committee of the Community Memorial Museum Association, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that exists to support the Sutter County Museum. Amber shares, "Everything is done by volunteers, which makes it challenging but also rewarding. The Sutter County Museum has always been so supportive of the garden, and they love having an outdoor space to hold programs and activities."

Volunteers at the garden are needed to help organize and run summertime events, as well as people willing to help with garden maintenance and watering during the summer months.

For more information, please visit the garden's Facebook page: Artisan Community Garden.

To inquire about helping with kids' programs or with maintenance, please email Amber at [artisancommunitygarden@gmail.com](mailto:artisancommunitygarden@gmail.com).

# Mornings in the Garden: Where More Than Flowers Grow

With the modernization of our society, our relationship with nature is being slid further and further onto the back burner. Where nature once surrounded and permeated every aspect of our daily life, it has now become a means of escape from life's many needs and obligations. It has become a place to relax, decompress and let one's hair down. This is why, in this issue of our newsletter, Family SOUP would like to feature our Mornings in the Garden.

From spring to mid-fall, Family SOUP hosts an event we call our Mornings in the Garden. These events are held on the fourth Saturday of every month from 10-11 AM at the Artisan Community Garden, located at 1333 Butte House Road in Yuba City. During these events, families can participate in a wide array of activities from arts and crafts, such as building pinecone bird feeders and creating sensory

bins, to listening and playing along with live music, to fun-filled games. Spending time at the garden also allows for the forging of connections between kids and parents alike.

Exposure to nature provides a wide range of benefits, but especially for kids. Building connections in a fun environment while providing a variety of exciting and creative outlets that allow children to engage with the nature around them is the mission of our Mornings in the Garden. If you and your children are looking for such an outlet, Family SOUP would love nothing more than to have you stop by, say hi and join us as we forge new connections, build new friendships, and make new memories.

Register to attend at [tinyurl.com/MorningsInTheGarden23](http://tinyurl.com/MorningsInTheGarden23) or contact [Leanne@FamilySoup.org](mailto:Leanne@FamilySoup.org) (530) 751-1925 ext. 110 for more information.





## YCPD's "At Risk Citizens Program" Supports Individuals at Risk for Elopement

Something that I wasn't prepared for as a parent was how much I would worry about the safety of my children. Once having a baby, it seems as though all of the dangers of the world are ever-present in the thoughts of and minds of parents. While all parents have dangers to be concerned about, parents of children with special needs can have additional concerns and worries unique to their child and his or her disability that may be extremely valid.

One such danger can be elopement or "wandering". As defined by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "Wandering is when someone leaves a safe area or a responsible caregiver. This typically includes situations where the person may be injured or harmed as a result."

According to a survey of parents cited by the CDC, 49% of survey responders reported that their child with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) has attempted to elope at least once after the age of 4 years old. Additionally, 26% of those who eloped were reported to be missing long enough to cause serious concern of bodily injury. The CDC stresses that this is not unique to children with ASD. Their website states, "Although many examples of dangerous wandering have focused on children with ASD, we know that challenges with communication, social interaction, attention, and learning can put many children and youth with developmental disabilities at risk for becoming lost or injured due to wandering."

The Yuba City Police Department is aware of this issue and has created the "At Risk Citizens Program" (ARC) to help support families and children at times of elopement. This program is designed for families caring for individuals with special needs, especially those with ASD or medical disorders such as dementia and Alzheimer's disease. The program aims to help those with high risk of wandering, elopement or getting lost through proactive methods of helping police officers and first responders identify and find those individuals.

Community Policing Coordinator, Drew Mitchell, explains that through the ARC Program, families can register their child within the YCPD database so that if they do become lost, officers can immediately identify them and reunite them with their family. Families are also asked to submit a photo of the child along with the registration. This can help officers to quickly identify a found child, which is especially important if there are communication barriers, and the child is unable to identify his or herself. Additionally, this information can help



quickly spread awareness of a child that has been reported lost by a caregiver, saving valuable time in cases of emergencies.

Mitchell also shared additional advice to help parents proactively prepare a child with special needs for working with police officers if he or she ever becomes lost. She shared that it would be helpful to teach children with communication barriers to have a structured communication process to be able to share with officers that they are in trouble and that they have a disability. This could come in both verbal and nonverbal forms and should be easy for your child to remember and access in a time of crisis. However, Mitchell warns to avoid teaching communication to be used in this situation that would require a child to abruptly reach into pockets as it might be interpreted as threatening behavior.

Another tool that Mitchell said would be helpful, would be to utilize disability alert bracelets. She said "[Alert Bracelets] are an easy form of identification and can help a child tell police and first responders who they are when they can't communicate. You can also include on the bracelets certain characteristics of your child's disability, things that he or she doesn't like such as loud noises, and can even include calming techniques."

To help our community learn more about how the ARC Program and how to protect individuals in danger of elopement, Family SOUP is hosting a virtual workshop presented by Drew Mitchell. Parents of children with special needs can attend this workshop on March 9th from 10- 11 am via zoom. Register to attend at [tinyurl.com/FSWorkshopARC](http://tinyurl.com/FSWorkshopARC) or contact Leanne@FamilySoup.org (530) 751-1925 ext. 110 for more information.



## In Our Library...

Family SOUP is excited to introduce a children's book series entitled "SuperCaptainBraveMan." This series follows Kyle, a young boy with a tracheostomy who utilizes a ventilator and a wheelchair. It covers events that he experiences in his day-to-day life. However, the main adventures in the series happen when he sleeps. In his dreams, Kyle transforms into his alter ego, SuperCaptainBraveMan. While wearing his superhero suit, Kyle flies around his town, assisting children with disabilities in need with such tasks as making friends with their peers and empowering themselves. And his adventures are far from over. This five-book-series is still ongoing, with the fifth book "The Hero Inside" having been released this year. This series can be read in any order. As of now, Family SOUP is in possession of only the fifth book, with more soon to follow. Come give this a read and unlock the hero inside of you.

Feel free to browse the list on our website at: [www.familysoup.org/library](http://www.familysoup.org/library)



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## Our Mission

is to empower families of children with special needs through support and education to reach their full potential as members of the community.

We are a 501(c)3 tax exempt non-profit organization. **Your donations make our programs possible.**

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If your address changes: Each returned piece of mail costs us \$0.50 and your family SOUP mail is delayed. If you move, please call or email Amber Soto with your new address at: (530) 751-1925 or [ambers@familySOUP.org](mailto:ambers@familySOUP.org)

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