

# AN OPEN LETTER TO GOVERNOR GAVIN NEWSOM, COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AND CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

We are the current students at San Pasqual Academy. We are the future success stories and positive contributors to the world. We are supposed to be under your care and protection, but since Sunday, February 21st, we feel you have forgotten about us. Focused on policies and money rather than our health, education, safety and futures.

We are ages 12-19 and have been at SPA ranging from 2 months to 5 years. No matter the length of time we have been here, the impact of this community has been overwhelming with support and acceptance, nothing we have ever experienced. We are a collective of diverse ethnicities, ages, genders, dreams, and perspectives. We are survivors of trauma that happened to us with our biological families and in previous foster care placements. We are thriving here at SPA. We matter to each other. Do we matter to you?

SPA Alumni, Simone Hidds-Monroe, a leader for foster youth and our community, came to campus yesterday to check in on us, to listen to us. She asked questions that you have yet to ask us because we do not have a seat at your table - where we should and need to be.



## Here is what we, the foster students of San Pasqual Academy have to say:

We invite you to visit our home, to meet us, and to hear our stories. We want you to know what this community and home truly means to us as you do not fully understand how your decision is directly and negatively affecting our current lives and futures.

SPA is our COMMUNITY. Our FAMILY. Our HOME. SPA is a stable, reliable, and permanent safe haven for us and the alumni who have been failed or rejected by foster homes and biological families. Our individuality and self expression is embraced. We are more than a number. This community is loving and teaches us how to love ourselves. We do not have to be perfect to stay here, instead we are supported through our mistakes.

Our SPA Family and Home provides us many opportunities and experiences. We do not have to apologize for who we were before we got here, our case file doesn't follow us here. We are given a second chance to be kids and be our true selves. We are given freedom to determine who we are, the life we deserve, and the futures we know we can have. Being surrounded by so many caring adults teaches us how to have healthy relationships, grow mentally and emotionally, encourages productive conversations and opinion sharing.

We have everything we need to be successful - dedicated adults and teachers, our siblings and friends, on site social workers and mental health support, extracurricular and leadership opportunities, and a consistent education. We learn independent living skills like cooking, cleaning, and taking care of our personal hygiene.

This support system provides us assistance in defining and accomplishing academic and career goals. SPA provides us with extracurricular activities like sports and healthy outlets. We will not be given these same opportunities anywhere else. We know because we have already been in those placements.

SPA helps us get into college. They support us through the entire application process, teach us to utilize financial assistance programs and scholarships, and help us plan for another living transition after we graduate from SPA.

After we age out this is still our home. We know that if we ever were in need we have a place to come to. Just like many young adults (including your kids) who return to their family home if they need to, THIS IS OUR FAMILY HOME.

The way the news was delivered was extremely inappropriate and traumatic. We came to SPA because we needed help, now that help is being taken away from us. We didn't have stable homes before SPA, now that we have been provided a stable, forever home you are taking it away. San Pasqual Academy is the only option for many of us. You will be separating families and breaking the family bonds we have worked hard to create. You will be re-traumatizing us.

We are afraid of the unknown. We are scared of the horrible experiences we endured before SPA becoming our reality, again. Being tossed around the foster care system for the rest of our teenage lives, having us fend for ourselves, being taken away from good people who we trust, love, and need. You are putting our lives in jeopardy.

Closing the doors on San Pasqual Academy means closing the door on countless foster youth - past, present, and future. You are shutting down a home to more than 20 classes of students, adults, and dreams. Your kids, right?

We ask you - How would you feel if your family's home was being taken away and you had no say in it? How would you feel if there was nothing you could do? Would you be afraid about the fate of your future? Would you sit back and let it happen or fight to keep it? This is what we are trying to accomplish. We want to keep our home. Please reconsider keeping San Pasqual Academy open for all of these reasons. We need our home.

We need this community.

Please LISTEN. Please RECONSIDER. SAVE SAN PASQUAL ACADEMY.

**STATE & COUNTY OFFICIALS PROPOSE TO CLOSE SAN PASQUAL ACADEMY  
DESPITE OVER 20 YEARS OF SUCCESS IN CARING FOR FOSTER KIDS.  
DO THE RIGHT THING AND KEEP SAN PASQUAL ACADEMY OPEN!**

