

Garden Pathways

2009 "Woman with a Heart for Bakersfield"

Christy Porter



Christy Porter has a heart of deep compassion for the needs of others. An exquisite tapestry of meekness, tenacity, kindness, and strength, Christy translates compassion into purposeful action that changes the plight of the most vulnerable. Christy finds value in the shunned and lovingly encourages them to uncover the beauty and fortitude within.

An advocate for women and children, Christy has supported a broad spectrum of philanthropic and social advocacy needs across the nation. Following the birth of her second child, Jasmine Nyree, in 1999, Christy encountered the heartbreak and challenges of the lack of quality medical, therapeutic, and childcare services for children with autism in Kern County. With trailblazing constancy, Christy resolved to give of her time in advocacy to find solutions. Determined to increase local accessibility to pediatric specialists with expertise in autism and other special needs, Christy initiated an ongoing dialogue with Bakersfield Memorial Hospital to address this void. Her family's generous gift to the hospital toward the development of the Children's Medical Center will usher in much-needed advancements in specialized pediatric care.

As founder, owner, and CEO of the Jasmine Nyree Day Center, the only private special needs day center in Kern County and the state of California, Christy is enabling children with severe disabilities to feel good about who they are in a caring and nurturing environment. The architecturally beautiful downtown facility that opened in October 2008 serves many children who have been rejected from other centers because of the severity of their needs. Christy's gift of hope to the community daily enriches the quality of life of both parents and children. Christy plans to expand with a new facility by the end of 2009.

Christy has co-chaired the annual Joey Porter Boot Camp for the past six years. Each year she provides scholarships to underprivileged students at her alma mater, Foothill High School. Christy believes that each person can succeed regardless of life's challenges. She motivates young people and women to trust themselves and work toward exceptional goals with confidence and focus. Putting an innovative twist on tradition, Christy developed Studio 555, a state-of-the-art beauty and barber shop specializing in African-American hair care with health and wellness services to treat the total person. She continues to pursue business ventures that will improve services to the underserved of southeast Bakersfield. Christy is a member of Greater Harvest Christian Center.

Born in Frederick, Oklahoma, Christy comes from a family of six girls. She excelled in high school as a basketball athlete. Christy attended Bakersfield College and Southwestern Oklahoma State, and is currently pursuing a degree in psychology at the University of Phoenix. Christy has been married for ten years to her high school sweetheart and "best friend," Joey Porter, Super Bowl winning, all-star linebacker of the Miami Dolphins. Christy takes great delight in their four children: Jayla, Jasmine, Joey Jr. and Jacob.