Who is Hester and how did Hester’s Box book drive come to life?

In the aftermath of December 2, Sharon Cobb and Bea Regalado from the Seniors Unit at the Inland Regional Center were inspired by tragedy to turn sadness into love by donating books to schools and homeless shelters in San Bernardino County. IRC partnered with Ready4Reading, a non-profit organization that promotes literacy in all ages. This organization’s founder, Lynette Ramirez, and her staff read to children in homeless shelters and donate a book to each child. This is to encourage children to learn to enjoy reading and to promote literacy.

This partnership was called “Hester’s Box.” Hester was a client of Sharon with whom she shared a unique bond. She was born on October 9, 1924 and passed away January 5, 2013. Hester was born in an era when well meaning professionals recommended that families place their loved ones in institutions. She had no known family yet she managed to make an impact on the hearts of all that crossed her path. Hester always had a smile and would tell you, “you’re nice” if she liked you. She did not know how to read nor write. She would sign her name with big “H’s” across the paper. She enjoyed looking at books and loved dolls. To know Hester was to love Hester.

This box was not only dedicated to Hester but to honor others who were developmentally disabled that were born in an era when individuals with disabilities were not embraced by society. Hester touched so many lives when she was living. She left an impact on all that knew her, that despite life circumstances, she always had a smile.
These donations to schools and homeless shelters in Hester’s name will spread her beautiful smile to others.

Pictured to the right are the Hester’s Box co-creators, Lynette Ramirez of Ready4Reading and Sharon Cobb of the Seniors Unit at Inland Regional Center and Hester’s CSC.