

# ALLIANCE VOICE

Preventing  
Abuse &  
Promoting  
Futures 6

Toddler's  
Solid Start 4

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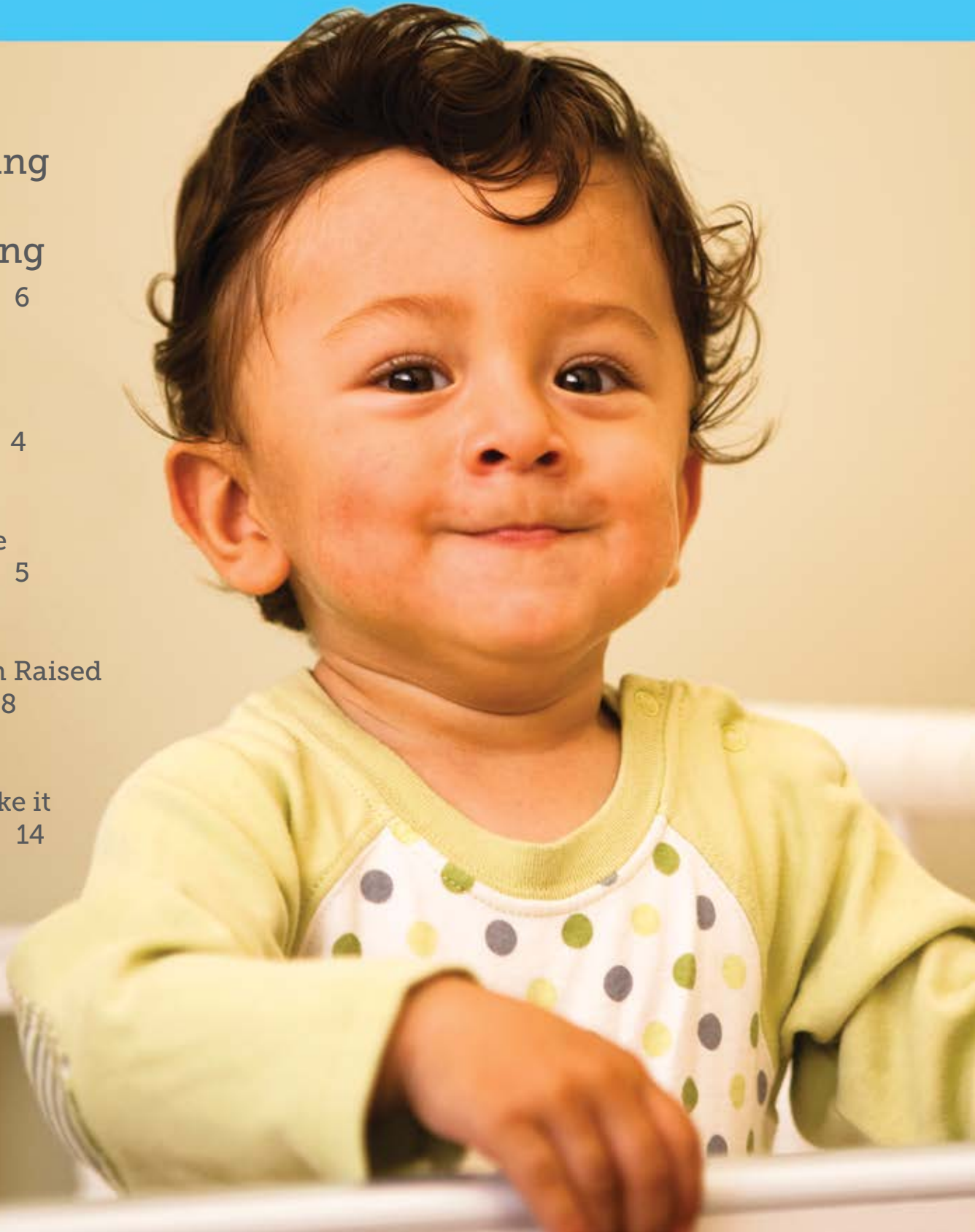
Collaborate  
for Impact 5

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\$1.3 Million Raised  
at Dinner 8

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Donors Make it  
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A MESSAGE FROM

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**CLIFF GILBERT-LURIE & JANIS SPIRE**  
CEO



Thank you for your tremendous turnout and generous support for our Annual Dinner (page 8) and RIGHT to LAUGH (page 10) events. We could not accomplish any of our goals without the financial support and dedication of all of you who have been friends to our Alliance family over the years.

With your help, we have exceeded many goals in our five year strategic plan. We focused efforts on infants and toddlers, children raised by relatives and the most vulnerable transition-age foster youth.

In the past year, the Saltz Family Early Intervention Advocacy Center obtained assessments and therapies

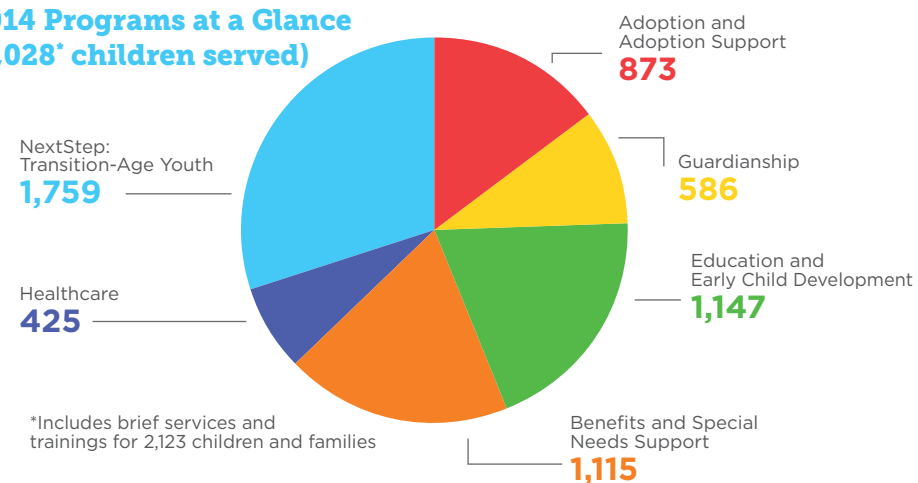
for 600 young children to overcome developmental delays. Looking ahead, we'll reach more through our parenting teen program (page 6), which prevents abuse and the cycle of foster care for children born to foster teens.

Our efforts on behalf of relative foster families resulted in the historic enactment of the Approved Relative Caregiver Program to provide funding that will lift children out of poverty. We will continue to push for a system that meets each child's unique needs (page 12).

Supporting the transition to independence for young adults makes a huge difference. In the last decade, we've reached 20,000 youth, bridging the gap to self-sufficiency. Through the L.A. Opportunity Youth Collaborative (page 5), even more will complete school and start a career. Recently, a former youth client, now a social worker, stopped by to pick up resources for her own clients. Moments like that bring such special meaning to our work.

Thank you for helping to make this all possible!

**2014 Programs at a Glance**  
(8,028\* children served)

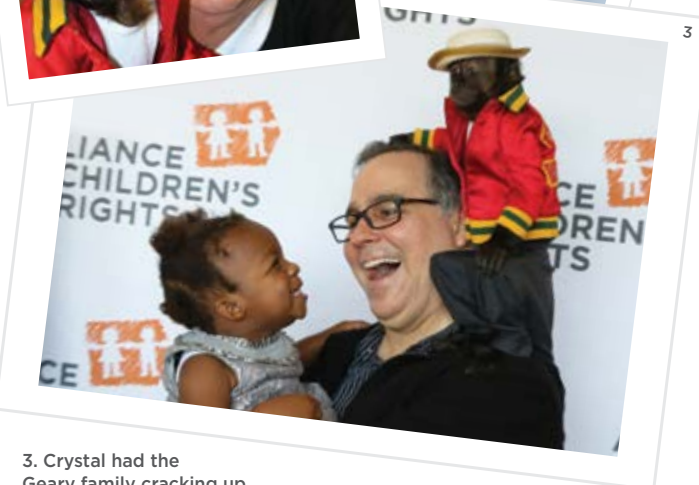
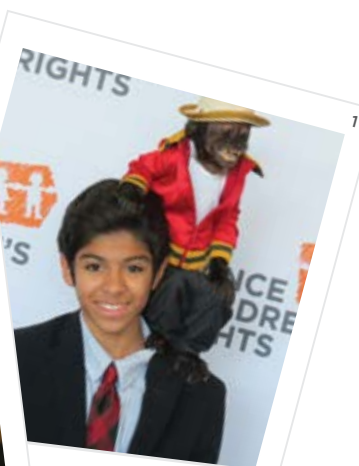


**MONKEYING AROUND**

Russell Madness star Crystal the Monkey joined us at a recent Adoption Day. Thank you to producer Anna McRoberts for creating so much fun for our kids and families!

1. Nathen Garson and Crystal

2. Crystal at the bench with Judge Nash



3. Crystal had the Geary family cracking up

**MYTHS ABOUT SINGLE PARENT ADOPTIONS DISPELLED**  
an adoptive mother explains the facts



Jodie Blum is an active volunteer passionate about working with foster youth. As the executive director of GrammyU, she hosted a job shadow day for youth interested in the music industry. Jodie has always wanted to adopt and we were thrilled to help create her forever family with Tristan, 5, earlier this year.

**MYTH: YOU CAN'T ADOPT A CHILD AS A SINGLE PARENT.**

**FACT:** I went through the same protocol and evaluations as any other family. There weren't challenges due to me being a single parent, but of course some days you think "wow, I could use a little more help."

**MYTH: THE PROCESS WAS TOO LONG AND DIFFICULT.**

**FACT:** While navigating services and the court process can be complicated, I would never think twice about my son. You'll do anything to make sure they have the best of everything so they are healthy and happy.

**MYTH: WHEN YOU DON'T ADOPT A BABY, YOU LOSE OUT ON 'FIRSTS'.**

**FACT:** I wanted a child between 3-5 years old, and we've experienced lots of firsts together. Tristan was with me when he lost his first tooth. The tooth fairy thing was new for me too! He also went on his first airplane ride, his first trip to the beach and of course I was there for his first day of kindergarten.

**THANK YOU JUNIOR LEAGUE!**



Junior League of Los Angeles hosted a phenomenal life skills workshop series empowering 80 young women in foster care!

**CELEBRATE UPCOMING ADOPTION DAYS**  
JULY 31 & NOVEMBER 20, NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY

# PROSKAUER ADVOCATES FOR TODDLER'S SOLID START

so he can walk, talk and learn

When Laura's mother became ill and was given one year to live, Laura decided to realize her own dreams and give her mother the joy of a grandchild. Laura, a teacher, adopted from the foster care system, knowing that many children languish there without the love of a family. Baby William entered Laura's home and the hearts of Laura and her mother soon after.

The Alliance met Laura and William through our medical-legal partnership at L.A. County + USC Medical Center, where William was being treated for Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. Laura repeatedly sought to get William speech and other therapies, but she was denied.

Laura needed legal muscle, so the Alliance asked pro bono partner Proskauer Rose attorneys Anthony DiBeneditto and Joe Perez to take the case. Their fierce advocacy in an intense negotiation with the agency resulted in substantial additional therapies for William.

**"It was is so intimidating, especially with my son's wellbeing on the line," said Laura. "Knowing that I had an engaged and responsive team fighting for my son was wonderful beyond words."**

The therapies that the Proskauer team obtained have made a big difference. Now three, William is walking, running and making friends at school. "ABCs and counting to ten are no



problem; colors and full sentences are next," said Laura. Laura is confident in Williams's future thanks to the dedicated attorneys at Proskauer. Even better, Laura's mom has recovered from her illness and can share in that future!

**"All pro bono matters are worthwhile, but I'm invested in cases like this where years from now, we could sit down and track how William progressed because of what we set out to do"**

**- Joe Perez, Attorney Proskauer Rose**



## High School Volunteer Invests in Foster Youth

Ashley Lee began interning at the Alliance in February 2014. She was an incredible asset, but what truly set her apart was the ingenuity she employed to help our clients. Ashley and her sister sold clothes and other items on Ebay and donated \$1,000 to the Alliance. She also purchased 100 duffel bags to give to children when they change homes. Just last month, the soon-to-be Harvard freshman donated \$2,000 in earnings from working in her parents' restaurant. Thank you, Ashley, for your generosity!

# COLLABORATE FOR IMPACT

to prepare more transition-age foster youth for success in school and work



## TAY SUCCESS



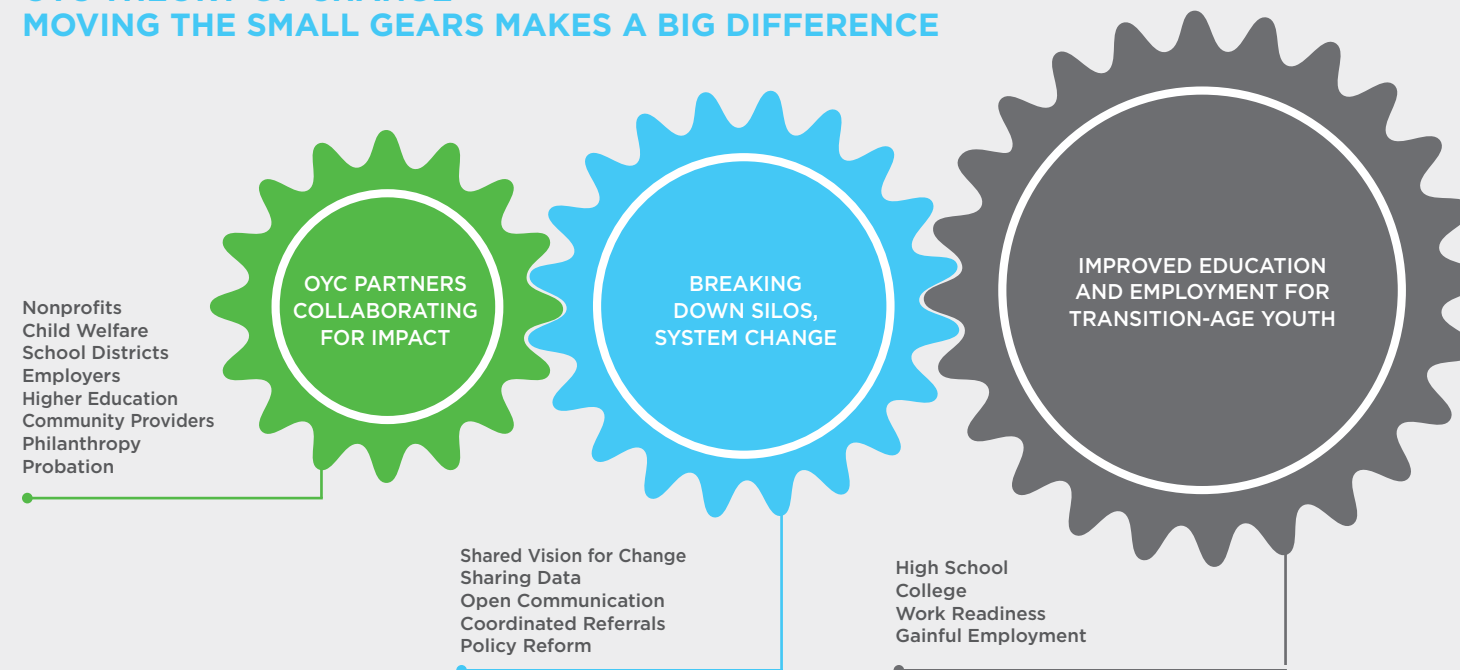
**Jesse Saucedo** spent most of his life in foster care and aged out into homelessness without a high school diploma. He found the **Coalition for Responsible Community Development**. He enrolled in a diploma program and secured a mentor. Soon after, he got a construction job through YouthBuild. Jesse recently moved into his first apartment. **A Sense of Home** furnished his new place and Jesse proudly shares photos with everyone he sees.

**The effectiveness of the OYC is evident in Jesse's success: he now has a home, diploma and work experience, and is finally creating the life he wanted.**

The Los Angeles Opportunity Youth Collaborative (OYC), which works in partnership with multiple agencies and builds pathways to education and employment for transition-age foster youth (TAY), is shaping a course of action for the year ahead. Four implementation groups are working to improve policies, resolve system barriers and enable TAY to obtain education and employment opportunities:

- 1. Pathways to Successful Outcomes for TAY:** Focuses on navigating smooth transitions for youth with a coordinated referral network and services to get youth on track to complete high school, achieve higher education and become ready for work and gainfully employed.
- 2. Youth Leadership:** Engages youth as ambassadors, spokespeople and self advocates.
- 3. Federal, State and Local Policy Reforms:** Makes policy recommendations to remove system barriers and ensure policies are tailored to best support the needs of TAY.
- 4. Collection and Use of Data:** Develops a set of common indicators to collect and evaluate the measurable outcomes for youth and the efforts of the collaborative.

## OYC THEORY OF CHANGE MOVING THE SMALL GEARS MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE



# SAVING FUTURE GENERATIONS FROM FOSTER CARE

helping teen parents and their babies succeed

The Alliance works with pregnant and parenting teens in foster care to access the services and support they need to parent successfully and become independent and capable adults. Current studies reveal that a child born to a teen parent in foster care is twice as likely to enter the child welfare system. The range of our programs enables us to impact the needs of teens as well as ensure the healthy development of their children. The goal of this comprehensive approach is to prevent abuse and thereby reduce the multi-generational cycle of foster care.

By age 21, 3/4 of young women in foster care will have experienced a pregnancy.

While teen pregnancy is declining in the overall population, rates among foster youth remain high. Attachment issues, desire for a family, limited access to reproductive healthcare and a lack of a vision for their future are factors. Our holistic approach gives teens a new vision and hope for themselves and their babies. To prevent pregnancy, we are working with the Dept. of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to equip foster youth with reproductive health knowledge and services.

## Pregnancy and Early Stages of Child Rearing

**At 10, Natalie, who experienced abuse and neglect as a young child, was lashing out in school, threatening her peers and even teachers. The Alliance advocated for her to receive mental health counseling, and in-classroom help so she could heal and succeed in school. This improved her grades, school experience and behavior. Despite this success, at 15, Natalie was pregnant.**

In response to the high rates of foster teen pregnancy, the Alliance and our partners created a program to support pregnant and parenting teens and their children. The program, called Pregnant and Parenting Teen Conferences, convenes DCFS, advocates, community partners and supportive individuals the teen identifies. The team assesses a youth's strengths, and develops a plan to overcome obstacles and achieve goals, such as high school graduation. Youth are



Parents and children engage in developmental play at Raising Baby.

connected to parenting and child development education, child care and job readiness programs. In addition, prevention of future pregnancies is addressed.

**Natalie's conference team included her aunt and guardian, adult sister, therapist, social worker and an Alliance Resource Specialist. She attended parenting classes, was linked to a doula and enrolled in the Nurse-Family Partnership, which pairs moms with nurse home visitors. This plan empowered Natalie to be a nurturing mother and to continue high school.**

We are amazed by the engagement we see from teen parents who participate in these conferences, the doula program and other parenting events. They learn the importance of talking and reading to their babies and the value of developmental play. At a recent Raising Baby event (pictured above), hosted by the volunteer group Alliance of Moms, young parents learned child safety tips and sleep techniques like drumming. Many downloaded drumming apps on the spot. This responsiveness shows youths' desire for tools on good parenting. Teens previously reluctant to focus on school or accept services become motivated by their desire to provide a better childhood for their babies than they experienced.

**Natalie received prenatal care and a doula supported her throughout the birthing process. When she went into labor ten weeks early and delivered her daughter, Alexa, her doula was by her side. Natalie learned to breastfeed and find child care so she could return to school in just three months.**

The Alliance has helped over 200 teen mothers.

## Early Intervention and Healthy Child Development

The first three years are the most critical for a child's healthy development. Our efforts ensure parents work towards goals and babies reach critical milestones. If the baby displays delays, the conference prevention model triggers the Alliance's early intervention experts to secure the assessments, therapy and support the child may need.

**When Alexa was six months old, the Alliance obtained developmental testing due to her premature birth. Alexa was eligible for Early Start services, which provided Natalie with in-home childhood development coaching to thwart delays. An additional screening indicated that Alexa needed further assistance, and the Alliance advocated for occupational therapies to improve her ability to crawl, play with blocks and pick up food.**

Of all children, infants face higher rates of maltreatment, especially as newborns.

## Successful Transitions to Independence

**Natalie will soon graduate high school and Alexa will see her mother walk the stage. She has her sights set on college and a career in the medical field. Alexa's life will be drastically different because of her mother's achievement, and the motivation she now has to be stable and financially independent. There's a long road ahead, but the Alliance will continue to support Natalie and Alexa every step of the way.**

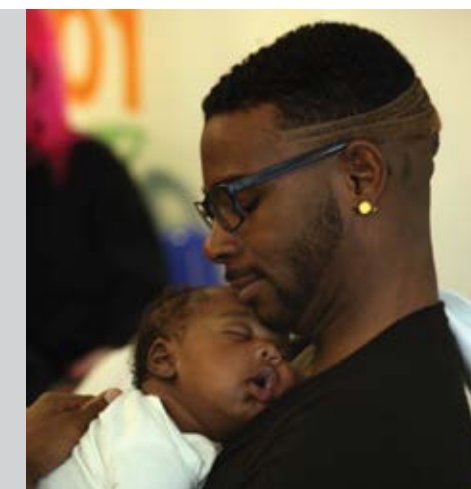
Reaching pregnant and parenting teens with an abuse prevention message, supporting their first months of parenting and building awareness of healthy child development is shifting outcomes, one teen parent at a time. Stronger policies are needed to ensure that the children of foster youth never face the trauma of abuse or neglect and instead grow up in healthy, loving families.

**"The Alliance walked me through becoming a responsible parent, enabling me to graduate college and become a social worker."**

- Jessica, former Alliance client

## MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE

Child care poses a major barrier for teen parents. We address this case by case and through our policy work. Similarly, the L.A. Opportunity Youth Collaborative raises awareness about the vital need for jobs, and links teen parents to employment. These efforts will deepen our impact on this vulnerable population.



A father learning child safety tips and nurturing activities with his infant son.

# 23<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL DINNER RAISES AWARENESS AND \$1.3 MILLION

The Alliance's 23rd Annual Dinner on Thursday, March 12, honored political activist and philanthropist **Yasmine Delawari Johnson** and **Matthew Johnson**, partner at Ziffren Brittenham LLP, as the 2015 National Champions for Children. Honorary Co-Chairs Mayor Eric Garcetti and First Lady Amy Elaine Wakeland presented the award for the Johnsons' unwavering dedication to children and youth in Los Angeles.

**Mark Ridley-Thomas** of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors was honored with the Francis M. Wheat Community Service Award for his commitment to issues impacting children and families living in poverty.

Max Greenfield of Fox's *New Girl* entertained guests as the emcee. While he brought levity to the evening, everyone felt the serious impact the Alliance has through firsthand stories from families and youth.

The dinner was co-chaired by Board Members **Susan Friedman, Leslie and Cliff Gilbert-Lurie, Sue Naegle, Rick Rosen** and **Toni Schulman**. Thank you to our amazing sponsors and guests for a memorable evening to celebrate our life-changing advocacy. Learn more and watch a moving video at [kids-alliance.org](http://kids-alliance.org).

Janis Spire with youth Sandra, Tyshanay and Michael



Mikaela and her dad Cliff Gilbert-Lurie



Mayor Eric Garcetti, Jackie Caster, CA Attorney General Kamala D. Harris



Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, Janis Spire, Congressman Bobby Scott, Jimenez children



Willie Garson, J.K. Simmons



Heather Helm, Matthew Lillard, Baron and Isabella Davis



Carol Biondi, Prophet Walker, Bill Resnick



Susan Saltz, Karen Mack



Nancy DeBrier, Janis Spire



Wendy Smith Meyer, John Schulman, Barry Meyer, Toni Schulman



Alliance of Moms founders Emily Lynch, Jules Leyser, Kelly Zajfen, Danika Charity, Yasmine Delawari Johnson with J.K. Simmons



Mayor Eric Garcetti, Yasmine Delawari Johnson, Amy Elaine Wakeland, Matthew Johnson, Max Greenfield



Phil Rudolph, J.K. Simmons



Jess Whitehill, Blake Rummel, Jessica and Matthew Babrick



Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, Leslie Gilbert-Lurie



David Steinberg, Chris Walther, Karin Pagnanelli



Bruce Rosenblum, Russell Goldsmith



# COMEDIC SLAM DUNK FOR KIDS

at the 6th Annual the RIGHT to LAUGH event

Steve Trevino, Sarah Silverman, Kymerly Marciano-Strauss, Bob Odenkirk, Natasha Leggero



On Wednesday, May 27, the 6th Annual the RIGHT to LAUGH comedy event at the Avalon Hollywood raised \$300,000 for Alliance programs! More than 350 guests enjoyed the night of nonstop laughs from **Sarah Silverman, Bob Odenkirk, Natasha Leggero, Paul Scheer, Kumail Nanjiani, Steve Trevino** and **Rory Scovel**.

Attendees truly amazed us this year with their generous support during our FOREVER hoodie auction benefitting youth transitioning out of foster care. Many thanks to title sponsor **LifeLock** and our other generous sponsors and donors. We couldn't have done it without our amazing committee and co-chairs **Peter Benedek, Gene Stein, Wendi Trilling** and **Kymerly Marciano-Strauss!** To learn more about the RIGHT to LAUGH and to see more photos, visit [kids-alliance.org](http://kids-alliance.org).

Jon Moonves with family and friends



Event Co-Chairs Wendi Trilling, Kymerly Marciano-Strauss and Gene Stein



Bob Odenkirk and Sarah Silverman



Crispin and Jules Leyser, Kelly and Julian Zajfen



Tafari Gonzalez-Aird, Terre Jacobs, Jeff Rudes



Bob Odenkirk, Rory Scovel, board members Steven Marenberg and Phil Rudolph with Paul Scheer



The room before the show



Ella Marciano, Evan Strauss



# UPCOMING EVENTS

17th Annual

Tennis for Tots | September 19, 2015



Catch us on the courts for a fun afternoon at the Los Angeles Tennis Club. All skill levels will enjoy our round robin doubles tournament followed by delicious barbeque. Tennis for Tots is generously hosted by Board Member Mitch Kaplan and Elliot Stahler of the Kaplan Stahler Agency. The event is held in memory of David and Lynn Angell—a couple committed to improving the lives of children, who tragically died on September 11, 2001.



12th Annual

"All-In" for Kids Celebrity Poker Tournament | October 18, 2015



Give Los Angeles foster children the upper hand and join us at the Commerce Casino's "All-In" for Kids Celebrity Poker Tournament. The Texas hold 'em tournament benefits the Alliance and brings together professional players and amateurs alike. It's a fun way to hone your skills at the tables among celebrity participants while supporting vulnerable children. Don't wait—register today.



**Thank you to City National Bank for sponsoring both events!** For more information and to register, visit [kids-alliance.org](http://kids-alliance.org).



## Kids Play, Moms Raise Funds at Giant Playdate

On Saturday, May 9, the Alliance of Moms (AOM) gathered together 200 philanthropic-minded families for a Giant Playdate to support L.A. foster kids. The event, hosted at the beautiful Lombardi House, raised \$45,000 and was sponsored by dozens of top brands, including Angel Swanson of Love & Splendor, Heirloom LA, Camp Craft, Flipbooth and Events 204. Children drummed and crafted while parents bid on impressive silent auction items. Thank you to AOM and the generous participants! Learn more at [allianceofmoms.org](http://allianceofmoms.org).

# POLICY AGENDA ZEROS IN ON FAMILY AND EDUCATION

## Los Angeles County Opt to Support Vulnerable Kids

Los Angeles and 40 other California counties have officially opted into the Approved Relative Caregiver Funding Option (ARC) Program, which makes state funds available to support foster children placed with relatives. Until ARC, many children placed in the home of a relative received little or no funding.

This year, the Alliance is working to refine the ARC program to ensure it works as intended and reaches all children living in relatives' homes. Assembly Bill 423 (Cooley) will make it clear that ARC eligibility and funding is automatic, so children don't miss months of vital assistance.

"We can't lose momentum from last year," said Assemblyman Ken Cooley. "There is more to do to ensure that these children receive the best support possible given the traumatic circumstances they have already endured."

### A Child-Centered Foster Care Assistance Model

The creation of ARC is a tremendous step in the right direction. However, it does not go far enough. ARC only provides the basic rate of funding, which means children with special needs will not receive the additional support they need.

**"Without adequate support, relatives have trouble caring for youth as they get older, putting them at risk of group home placement."**

For these reasons, the Alliance and its partners are sponsoring AB 878 (Eggman) to shift California's existing foster care rate system and pay benefits based on a child's needs, not whether they are placed in a relative's home, non-relative foster home, group home or through a foster family agency. We are also weighing in on AB 403 (Stone) to ensure proposals for the Continuum of Care Reform, a mandated state effort to reduce reliance on group homes



and ensure every child is raised in a family, includes a focus on the needs of relative foster families and moves in the direction of a child-centered foster care rates system.

The rates we pay directly to our foster families are vitally important to the overall well-being of the child and the family itself. Families can be quickly overwhelmed financially and emotionally, particularly relatives who are called upon to care for multiple children as they incur costs for therapies, tutoring and other services that help normalize the child's experience. Without adequate support, relatives have trouble caring for youth as they get older, putting them at risk of group home placement.

### Upholding Educational Rights

The education outcomes of students in foster care are abysmal. While the Legislature has enacted laws giving foster youth additional rights to aid them in pursuing and completing their education, these laws are often ignored by schools and child welfare workers. There is no legal mechanism for foster youth to challenge being denied their rights under these laws (for example, to remain in their school of origin). The Alliance is sponsoring AB 379 to expand access to the Department of Education's existing Uniform Complaint Procedure to allow foster youth to seek enforcement of their important education rights.

**" I couldn't talk. I had no voice. I couldn't relate.**

**I took care of others. When they asked me about me, I asked about them."**

**- Chardae McCullough, Alliance Youth Council**  
From the new book *Aging Out*



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## Alliance of Moms



Introducing the Alliance of Moms, the new auxiliary group that supports the work of the Alliance for Children's Rights through fundraising, awareness and youth-focused events.

Their mission is to grow a community of moms in Los Angeles to support children in foster care who live without the foundation of family. "Moms" can be anyone who wants to make a difference in the lives of our clients.

For more information visit [allianceofmoms.org](http://allianceofmoms.org).

## SAVE THE DATE!

**September 19, 2015**

**17th Annual  
Tennis for Tots**

Have fun on the court while supporting L.A.'s kids



**October 18, 2015**

**12th Annual "All-In"  
for Kids Celebrity  
Poker Tournament**

Join us at Commerce Casino for a day at the tables



**November 20, 2015**

**National Adoption Day**

Thousands of children are adopted into families forever on this joyous day!



Visit [kids-alliance.org](http://kids-alliance.org) for details.

