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#### A MESSAGE FROM

BOARD CHAIR

# CLIFF GILBERT-LURIE & JANIS SPIRE



Thank you for your generosity and support; it has already been an extraordinary year. Our 24th Annual Dinner was a record breaker. The \$1.6 million raised will allow our staff and volunteers to support thousands of children and their foster care families.

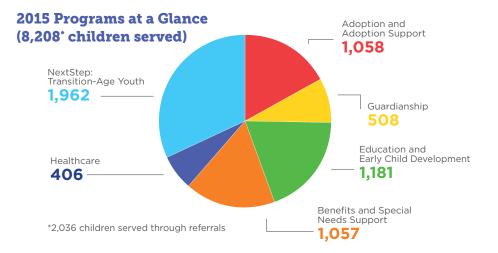
In this issue, we spotlight the groundbreaking work of our Education Program to overcome the myriad hurdles foster children encounter in school. One major challenge is frequent changes in home placements — typically 4 to 15 placements per child through age 19 — which often force children into new schools. With each school change they fall behind both academically and

socially. Ultimately fewer than half of foster kids graduate high school.

The Alliance is waging battle one foster child at a time, to ensure they obtain needed services and benefit from existing laws which support their stability and progress in school. Simultaneously, we are working with state and local officials to influence policies and enforce laws that will improve academic outcomes for all foster children (pg. 5).

We are also proud to announce our receipt this past spring of the Yawa' Award from the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians. The award paid tribute to our partnership with the Juvenile Court to better support Native American children. These children are particularly at risk of invisibility in an overwhelmed child welfare system (pg. 3).

With your support, we look forward to continuing these and other efforts to brighten futures for our children and for future generations.



## **ADOPTION DAY WAS ALL SMILES AND HUGS**



#### THANK YOU ICM PARTNERS



ICM Partners volunteers came out to support the Alliance's Adoption Day on February 26. Serving as courtroom assistants, the group helped to facilitate and celebrate the adoptions of 56 kids.

Join us at the next adoption days August 5 & November 18.

#### We welcome Giselle Fernandez, Richard Martinez, and Gary Newman to the Alliance Board



Five-time Emmy winning journalist, producer, film maker and media marketing entrepreneur, Giselle Fernandez is the

creator and host of the online interview series, "Big Shots." Fernandez is a member of the Banc of California Hispanic Advisory board, President Obama's Futuro Fund, and the John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts. She is board member for City Year, Excelencia in Education, the Hispanic Heritage Foundation, and the Eva Longoria Foundation.



Richard Martinez is the superintendent of the Pomona **Unified School** District. Martinez is an education pioneer

and has been honored with awards from the California School Board Association and the U.S. Department of Education. A native of East Los Angeles, Martinez is an advocate for foster youth. He began his career in crisis intervention for the Bell Gardens Police Department before shifting his focus to education.



Gary Newman is Chairman/CEO of Fox Television Group. His programming has dominated awards races and broken new

business models which have become the industry standard. Newman has been named MIPCOM's "Personality of the Year," was inducted into B&C's Hall of Fame and been honored by organizations from Variety to UCLA's Jonsson Cancer Center. He serves on the boards of Paley Center, the Hollywood Radio & Television Society, Chrysalis, and the Jewish Television Network.

## MCDERMOTT, WILL & EMERY LLP ADVOCATES FOR INFANT'S NEEDS

Markey Market Market Comment of the Comment of the

so Thomas can get essential medical care

Thomas was born with cerebral palsy and other serious disabilities requiring extensive and ongoing medical attention. Unfortunately, Thomas' mother had a history of severe mental illness and, although she loved Thomas, she was not equipped to care for him. She requested that Dawn Parker, a longtime family friend, step in. When Dawn learned that she needed legal guardianship to care for Thomas and consent to his medical care and treatment, she contacted the Alliance. Terese Mosher Beluris, Partner at McDermott, Will & Emery LLP and Alliance pro bono, offered to help Dawn through the court process.

On the day of the guardianship hearing, Thomas' mother unexpectedly showed up to court. Terese showed great sensitivity to the mother while

"She (Terese) was encouraging and so capable and skilled at her job. She was just wonderful to work with and I appreciate her more then she could ever know."

- Dawn Parker



successfully convincing the judge that Dawn must become Thomas' legal guardian in order for him to thrive.

Now two, Thomas is getting the care he needs and, according to Dawn, he is doing great!

#### San Manuel Tribe Honors Alliance with Yawa' Award

For the eighth year, the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians hosted its Forging Hope Breakfast, honoring four exceptional nonprofits that have demonstrated the concept of Yawa' — the simple Serrano word for the complex concept of "acting on one's beliefs." The Alliance for Children's Rights received the Health Yawa' award for service to poverty-stricken and abused children.



CEO Janis Spire and Legal Director Laura Streimer accepted the award on behalf of the organization and spoke to the importance of working closely with allies. Spire stated, "The San Manuel Band of Mission Indians' generosity over the years has allowed us to create an innovative partnership with the court to prevent American Indian children in foster care from falling through the cracks of our system."

Photo Caption: San Manuel Chairwoman Lynn Valbuena; Treasurer Sbrina Nakhjavanpour; Alliance CEO Janis Spire; Alliance Legal Director Laura Streimer; Secretary Ken Ramirez (Photo courtesy of San Manuel Band of Mission Indians)



### **OYC CAREER PATHS**

COUNTED AND MANAGEMENT

foster youth get training and jobs





Meeting and speaking with these youth looking for jobs was one of the most uplifting, fulfilling, simply wonderful experiences ever. These kids made my heart soar.

- Susan Friedman | Alliance Board Member and Volunteer Interviewer

The L.A. Opportunity Youth Collaborative (OYC) is creating a pipeline between job-ready foster youth and major employers. OYC partners provide these youth with a continuum of support to ensure long term success. The most signifigant program to date is the grocery initiative brought to Los Angeles by iFoster and expanded and scaled through the OYC. The grocery industry is hiring our foster youth, and the OYC Careers Program has already brought together 23 provider agencies, employers, and 127 youth who have been hired or are being interviewed for jobs right now. The achievements in this program will continue to grow and expand to serve and employ more youth.

As part of the program, youth participate in mock job interviews, and we are very thankful to all the Alliance volunteers who came out to help!

#### ON THE JOB SUCCESS STORY



We are excited to report on one of the 35 youth who participated in the first cohort of the OYC Careers Program through iFoster and the grocery industry. Lisa, age 23, is working hard to establish a career and care for her two-year-old son. Before enrolling in the Careers Program, Lisa unsuccessfully searched for a job for over a year. Through the OYC partners, Lisa participated in a rigorous work readiness training, and is now working for Nabisco to create promotional displays in grocery stores across L.A. Lisa is proud of her accomplishments. On her days off, she likes to visit her local grocery store to admire her handiwork.



Meet Thomas Lee: New Director of L.A. Opportunity Youth Collaborative

We are pleased to welcome Thomas Lee as our new OYC Director. During his decade of leadership as the Division Director for Hillsides Youth Moving On, he worked strategically to broaden the scope of care and outcomes for transition age foster youth. A former teacher, Thomas is a tireless advocate, and his ability to build partnerships and mobilize system change will have a powerful positive impact on the future of L.A.'s foster youth as he leads the OYC.

## FOSTER YOUTH NEED STABILITY AND SUPPORT FROM K TO 12

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Alliance seizes opportunity to change trajectories

There are 28,000 children in L.A. County foster care. More than half have learning and behavioral disabilities arising from trauma, abuse, and neglect. Without treatment and support, these children often act out at home and in school. Their challenges are further exacerbated when, as a result of their behaviors, their home placements and schools repeatedly change.

As the Alliance steps in for clients like Jonathan (see below), we are also working to change and create policies to improve education outcomes for all children in foster care.

#### A door to change opens

In 2013, California's Legislature made a historical financial investment in at-risk youth in the state's schools — **the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF)** — which provides districts with money earmarked to identify and support foster youth, low-income students and English-language learners.

"The area of foster youth is a new one for most districts. It's not one where districts have taken

**real direct action in the past,"** said Teri Burns of the California School Boards Association. LCFF created a unique opportunity for the Alliance to work collaboratively with California's schools.

To support school districts, the Alliance developed a Foster Youth Education Toolkit and a corresponding webinar series. The toolkit includes a breakdown of key education laws, practice tips, and adaptable templates. Since 2014 the Alliance has distributed the Toolkit and conducted trainings for more than 3.000 school district

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personnel and child welfare workers across the state.

This work is in partnership with the CA Department of Education, CA School Board Association, Association of CA School Administrators, CA County Superintendents Education Services Association, CA County Welfare Directors Association, and the Child Welfare Council.

#### **MEET JONATHAN**

#### 3rd grade



Jonathan entered foster care. He was a bright student, but the physical abuse he had endured at the hands of his parents — compounded by the trauma of separation when he was removed from their home — caused his grades to plummet.







#### 6th grade



Jonathan was acting out badly, responding to conflict with physical violence. He was suspended from school on several occasions, and was ultimately removed from the home of his aunt and put in a group home.







## 

#### A "deep dive" learning lab

The Alliance has partnered closely with The Bonita Unified School district (BUSD) since spring 2015 to support their education program and to improve upon the tool kit. BUSD was selected because:

- 1) it serves 500+ foster youth annually, half of whom live in foster group homes,
- 2) BUSD leadership is eager to build a best practices program, and
- 3) BUSD was willing to create meaningful change in a short period of time.

The most notable reform to date is a new enrollment policy that is legally compliant and focused on the individual needs of the youth.

"Our participation in this partnership has been both exciting and productive," said Mark Rodgers, Senior Director, Student Services at BUSD. "The access we have had to the Alliance and Department of Children & Family Services has allowed us to move quickly to not only be more compliant, but also to deeply understand the needs of our foster youth and design more effective ways to support them."

#### A critical mass of educators and advocates

The Toolkit is a living document that is regularly updated in response to feedback and to reflect changing laws. The Alliance is working closely with its partners and underserved school districts to make sure that educators, administrators, and social workers are aware of these changes and have access to trainings, webinars, and technical assistance.

"Schools are eager to comply with the requirements of LCFF and have welcomed our expertise in developing policies and practices."

- Jill Rowland, Alliance Education Program Director

The momentum created by LCFF holds the promise of real improvement to education outcomes for foster youth. The Alliance's expertise regarding child welfare and the needs of foster children has been embraced by schools and agencies across the state. Working with a critical mass of partners, the Alliance is seizing this opportunity to change trajectories for foster youth for years to come.

We thank those who have supported our education work this year, particularly the following: Annenberg, Conrad N. Hilton, Gary Saltz, Green, Joseph Drown, Ralph M. Parsons, and Stuart Foundations

#### 8th grade



Jonathan was diagnosed with PTSD, but was not receiving special education or mental health services. Instead, he became disruptive in class and was at constant risk of expulsion. Jonathan had changed schools several times. Each time he moved, he lost credit for completed work. He fell behind and was not on track to finish high school.



NO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES



#### 10th grade



The Alliance helped Jonathan return to the stability of his aunt's home and receive counselling, partial credits, and special education services so he could catch up. Jonathan graduated high school on time. Without the Alliance, Jonathan likely would have joined the bleak statistical ranks of foster youth: 55% do not complete high school, and within two years of aging out become homeless, incarcerated, or on welfare.







## 24<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL DINNER RAISED RECORD-BREAKING \$1.6 MILLION

At the Beverly Hilton's International Ballroom on March 10, the Alliance honored Fox Television Group Co-Chairmen and CEOs Dana Walden and Gary Newman with the 2016 National Champions for Children Award, for the duo's longstanding support of children in need. *Grandfathered* star John Stamos emceed the awards dinner, which also featured an appearance by Seth MacFarlane and a musical performance by Ne-Yo.

Education innovator Richard Martinez, Superintendent of the Pomona Unified School District, was honored with the Francis M. Wheat Community Service Award for his work as a champion for collaboration, urban education, and foster children.

The dinner was co-chaired by board members Susan Friedman, Cliff Gilbert-Lurie, Leslie Gilbert-Lurie, Sue Naegle, Rick Rosen and Toni M. Schulman with honorary chairs Peter Rice, Rick Rosen, and Chase Carey. Thank you to our amazing sponsors and guests for a memorable evening celebrating our life-changing advocacy. Learn more, see the full photo album and watch a moving video at bit.ly/Alliancedinner.







Youth speaker Barry Bartlett



The Los Angeles Children's Chorus under the direction of MUSE/IQUE



Honoree Richard Martinez, Giselle Fernandez, Leslie & Cliff Gilbert-Lurie



Rick Rosen, Honorees Gary Newman, Dana Walden & Brian Grazer





Chris Silbermann & Julie Bowen



Board Members Rick Rosen, Phil Rudolph, Mitch Kaplan & Toni Schulman



Ryan Murphy & David Miller



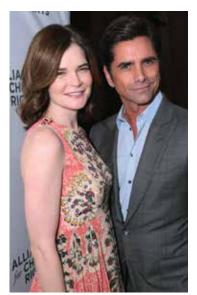
Richard Martinez & Leslie Gilbert-Lurie



Seth MacFarlane, Gary Newman, Dana Walden & John Stamos



Terry Crews flanked by Alliance of Moms members Erin Ziering, Sophie Pierce, Jules Leyser, Yasmine Delawari Johnson, Kelly Zajfen & Danika Charity



Betsy Brandt & John Stamos



Terry Crews & Reggie Hudlin



Zev Yaroslavsky, Jackie Caster & Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas



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Frank Litvack, Kymberly Marciano-Strauss, Shelly Litvack & Susan Smidt



"It felt like the Alliance were the only people, the only entity, that had our kid's best interests at heart, the same as we did." - Martin Lopez

### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

18th Annual

Tennis for Tots | September 24, 2016 | Los Angeles Tennis Club

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Reserve your spot on the court for \$250

Catch us on the courts for a fun afternoon at the Los Angeles Tennis Club to support vulnerable children. All skill levels will enjoy a round robin doubles tournament and delicious barbeque after working up a sweat! Tennis for Tots has raised over \$1.3 million since 1999 and is generously hosted by board member Mitch Kaplan of the Kaplan Stahler Agency and his agency partner, Elliot Stahler. The event is held in memory of David and Lynn Angell—a couple committed to improving the lives of at-risk children, who tragically died on September 11, 2001.



Alliance board member, Bart Williams

#### Raising Baby | September 24, 2016 | Children's Institute, Inc.



auxiliary group of the Alliance for Children's Rights.

Raising Baby is the Alliance of Moms' flagship educational event. It is a day of interactive workshops focused on educating expecting and parenting youth about early brain development and parenting. The event provides youth with access to a variety of resources through partner organizations such as Children's Institute, Project Fatherhood, Echo Parenting, Too Small to Fail, and many others.



Alliance of Moms supporter Jessica Alba and child

7th Annual

the RIGHT to LAUGH Comedy Event | October 6, 2016 | Avalon Hollywood presented by LifeLock



**Sponsorship** opportunities start at \$2,500 and tickets are \$250

This popular event has raised over \$1 million since 2010 and has featured some of the best in comedy including Jimmy Kimmel, Kumail Nanjiani, Martin Short, George Lopez, Wanda Sykes and many more. More than 500 guests from the entertainment, corporate and philanthropic communities will come together to laugh and raise funds for the Alliance's children and families. Special thanks to event chairs Peter Benedek, Kymberly Marciano-Strauss, and Gene Stein.



Comedians Bob Odenkirk and Sarah Silverman

For more information and to register for these events, visit kids-alliance.org.

## CHILD CARE IS CRUCIAL FOR FOSTER FAMILIES

obtaining care is an acute problem



"Giving our foster families access to early care and education helps us to recruit and retain more families, stabilizes children at a critical moment of their lives, and helps us make sure that they benefit from high-quality, ongoing, traumainformed child development services."

White with the water the w

- Shelia Kuehl, Los Angeles County Supervisor

Access to quality early care and education is critical to the successful recruitment and retention of foster families. It is also essential to helping foster children heal from trauma. California offers subsidized early care and education programs (similar to the federal Head Start program) and prioritizes the enrollment of foster children in these programs. Yet, foster families still struggle to access these programs, even when they need them most. In Los Angeles only 12.8% of foster children under five receive child care services.

One major reason that foster families have trouble accessing state child care is because these programs are almost always full. Most programs can only sign children up during short enrollment windows that rarely align with the moment a child enters into foster care or moves to a new home. This problem is especially acute for relative caregivers who answer the call to take in a child, or more frequently, sibling groups, at a moment's notice without any opportunity to plan ahead financially, set aside time off from work and arrange for child care.

The LA's Children's Welcome Center estimates that 25% of denials for placement were due to the lack of child care. Research shows that children placed in a new home are at the greatest risk of instability, especially in the first six months. It is during this crucial time that access to a

short-term voucher is needed to provide caregivers the ability to find temporary care for children while they are on waiting lists for the state subsidized child care slots.

"There were all these hoops I had to go through. I had to take off of work for a lot of things. I ended up having to completely resign from my job. That whole experience, I wish it on no one."

- Tiffany (former foster parent)

The Alliance is working with a coalition of child care and child welfare advocates, led by Supervisor Sheila Kuehl (Los Angeles), to advocate for an emergency child care youcher program which would:

- (1) Provide foster families with a 6-month emergency child care voucher that they can use at the moment of placement,
- (2) Give foster families the support of a child care navigator to help them transition to long-term subsidized child care, and
- (3) Train child care providers in trauma-informed care.

In April, a group of caregivers and advocates led by the Alliance testified before the Health and Human Services Budget Subcommittees in the Assembly and Senate urging them to fund the Child Care Bridge Program for Foster Children. At the time of printing, the \$31 million request is under submission.

### THANK YOU ALLIANCE OF MOMS

Your generosity supports expecting and parenting youth in foster care



#### ALLIANCE OF MOMS

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#### The Alliance of Moms is an auxiliary group of the Alliance for Children's Rights, Learn more and get involved at allianceofmoms.org

This list includes Alliance of Moms members who joined prior to March 31, 2016.

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your generosity and commitment enable us to protect the health and well-being of children

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