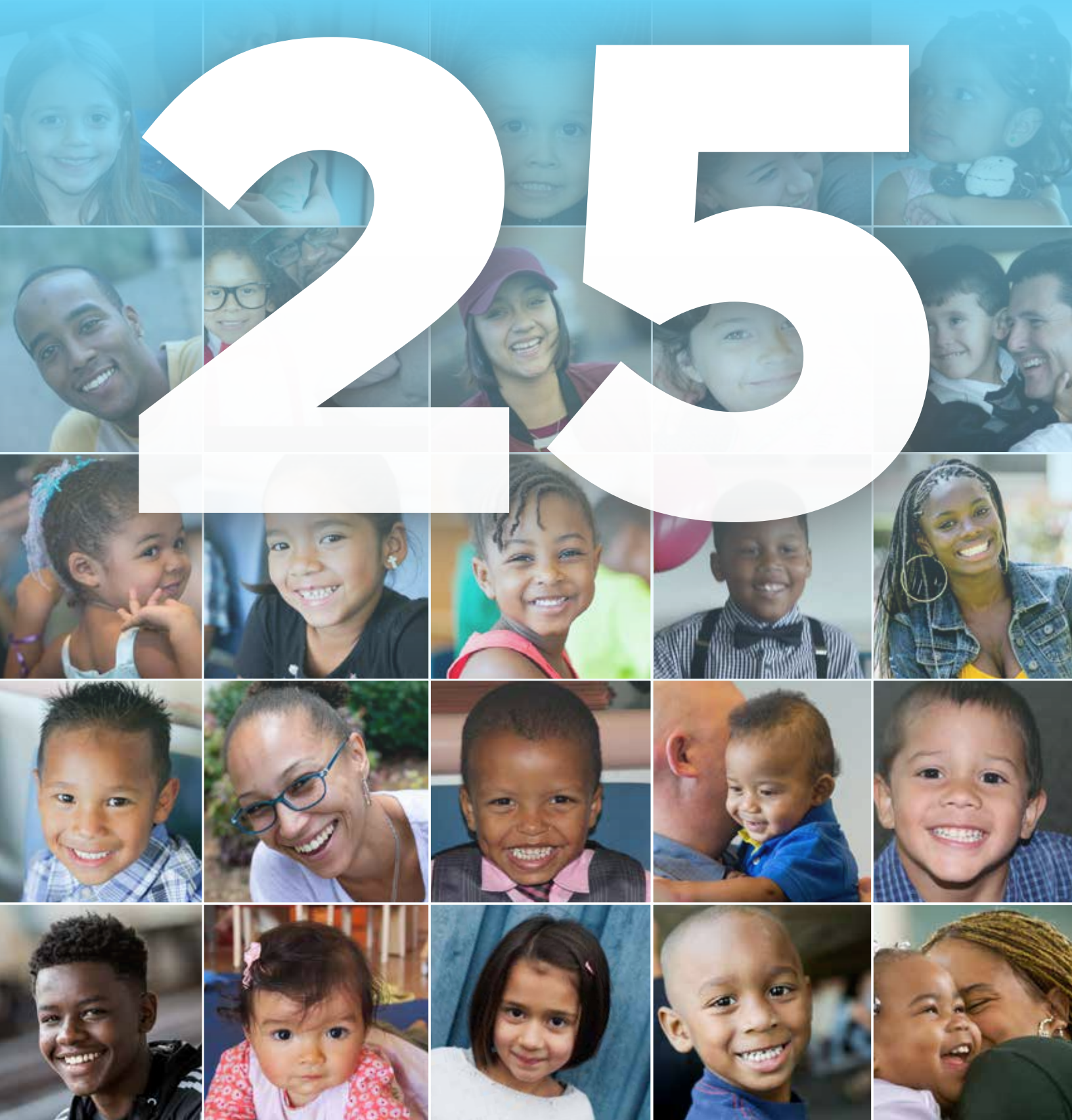


ALLIANCE VOICE

25



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CHAIRS

Leslie Gilbert-Lurie
Writer, Child Advocate & Attorney

Steven A. Marenberg
Irell & Manella LLP

SECRETARY

Phillip Rudolph
Jack in the Box, Inc

TREASURER

Chris B. Walther
Activision Blizzard

Matthew D. Babrick
Goldman, Sachs & Co.

Peter Benedek
United Talent Agency

James P. Clark
LA City Attorney

Dena Cook
Brew Media Relations

Trent Copeland
Attorney & TV Legal Analyst

Nancy de Brier
Attorney Search Consultant

Scott Edelman
Gibson Dunn

E. Martin Estrada
Munger, Tolles & Olson LLP

Susan F. Friedman
NBC News (Ret.)

Andrew D. Garelick
Skadden

Cliff Gilbert-Lurie*
Ziffren Brittenham LLP

Barbara Grushow
Barbara Grushow Designs

Angie Harmon
Actress & Child Advocate

Yasmine Delawari Johnson
Alliance of Moms

Jo Kaplan
Commissioner, LA County Probation

Mitchell T. Kaplan
Kaplan Stahler Agency

James Lichtman
NBCUniversal

Gwyn Lurie
Screenwriter, Alcove Films

Karen Mack
Writer & Producer

Richard Martinez
Pomona Unified School District

Sue Naegle
Annapurna Pictures

Gary Newman
Fox Television Group

Kevin Reilly
Turner Entertainment Networks

Rick Rosen
William Morris Endeavor

Bruce Rosenblum
Disney/ABC Television Group

Susan Saltz
Child Advocate & Film Producer

José F. Sanchez
Sidley Austin LLP

Toni M. Schulman*
Child Advocate

Pamela Soper, ex officio
CBS Television

Bart H. Williams*
Proskauer Rose LLP

Noelle Wolf
Child Advocate

Robert J. Woolway
FocalPoint Partners, LLC

FOUNDER

Francis M. Wheat*
1921-2000

PRESIDENT & CEO
Janis Spire

LEGAL DIRECTOR
Jennifer Braun

* Past Chairs

A MESSAGE FROM

BOARD CO-CHAIRS

LESLIE GILBERT-LURIE & STEVEN MARENBERG



Incoming co-chair Leslie Gilbert-Lurie, outgoing chair Cliff Gilbert-Lurie, CEO Janis Spire, and incoming co-chair Steven Marenberg

This is an exciting time in the life of the Alliance. Many of you know that our beloved CEO, Janis Spire, has announced her intention to retire. Now, we are getting ready to enthusiastically announce our new CEO. Our new CEO will be backed by an incredible, energetic staff, many of whom are child welfare leaders in their own right.

As incoming co-chairs of the Alliance board, we want to express our deep gratitude to our outgoing chair, Cliff-Gilbert-Lurie. Cliff's steadfast guidance has helped us grow, improve, and prepare for this moment of transition and new beginnings.

Championing vulnerable children and families is more urgent than ever. For that reason, we are launching a campaign for sustained giving that we call the Road to Justice. The campaign supports initiatives including our Advocacy Academy (see center spread) that will secure California's place as a leader in compassionate, progressive child welfare reform.

There is much we need to accomplish over the next few years. Please join us in being part of the future of the Alliance!

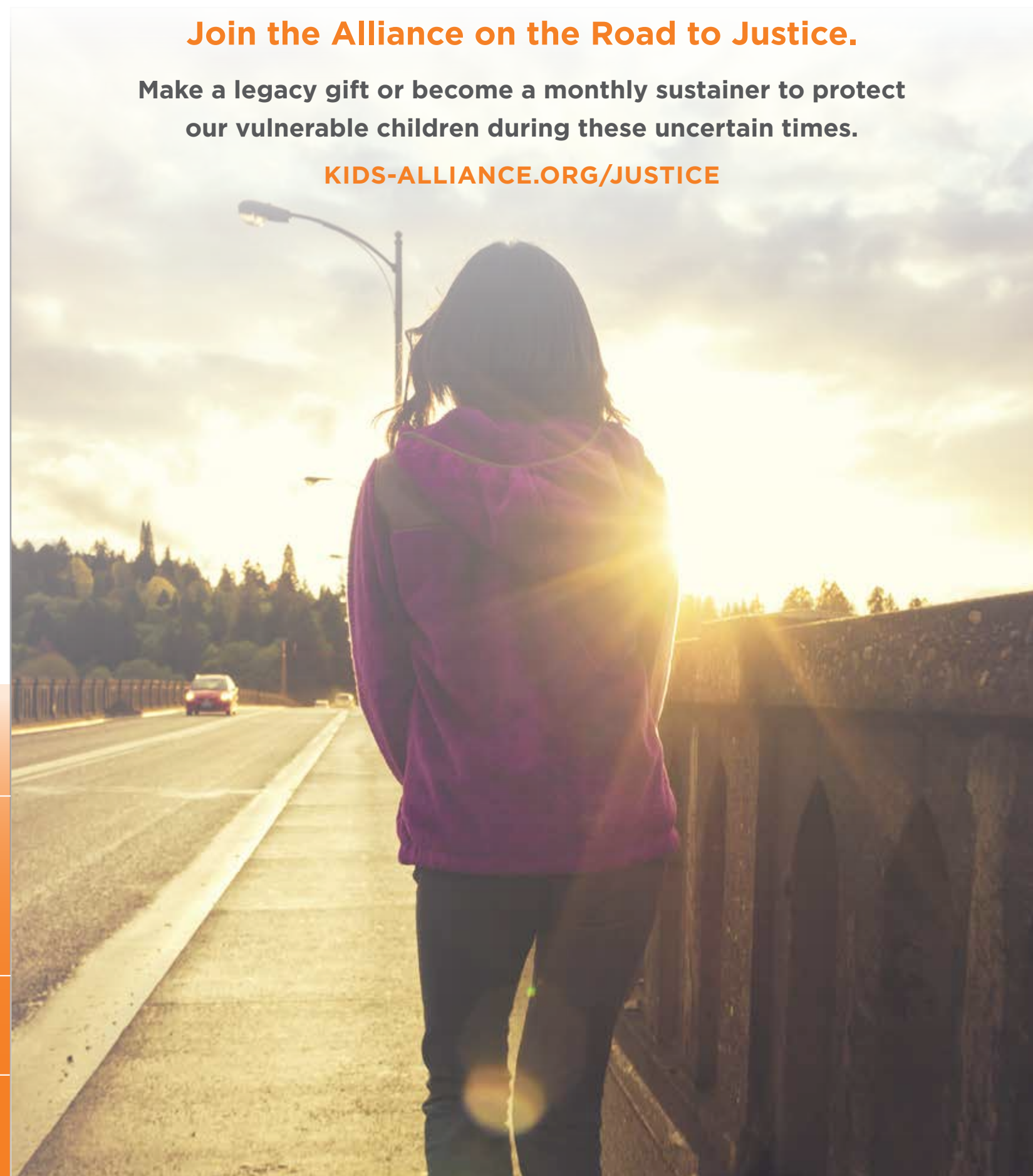
- Leslie and Steve

**Thank you for being part of our 25 year history.
Now, be part of our future.**

Join the Alliance on the Road to Justice.

Make a legacy gift or become a monthly sustainer to protect our vulnerable children during these uncertain times.

[KIDS-ALLIANCE.ORG/JUSTICE](https://kids-alliance.org/justice)



CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF...

FAMILY

The Alliance has completed **20,000 adoptions and guardianships.**

We have recovered **\$21m in denied benefits and healthcare services for children.**

We created **National Adoption Day**, celebrating thousands of adoptions every year around the country.

EDUCATION

We have championed the needs and education rights of **10,000 students in foster care.**

JUSTICE

We succeeded in changing laws to extend **foster care to age 21** and won equitable support for foster children being raised by their relatives.



MEET OUR NEW LEGAL DIRECTOR JENNIFER BRAUN

This spring, Jennifer Braun joined the Alliance as our new legal director, following the departure of Laura Streimer. Streimer joined the bench as Superior Court Commissioner, after serving the Alliance for more than a decade.

Braun brings over three decades of experience to the position. Previously, she served as Assistant United States Trustee with the Department of Justice, combatting abuses of the bankruptcy system and overseeing a team of attorneys and investigators. Braun also worked at Bet Tzedek Legal Services supervising attorneys and volunteers working on behalf of indigent Los Angeles County residents on consumer protection, housing, bankruptcy, probate, elder law, SSI and other matters.

Braun is passionate about representing the needs and interests of children in foster care. "I also am particularly

excited to help address the issues facing transition-age youth," she notes. "At Bet Tzedek and the Department of Justice, I dealt with identity theft and fraud cases in which vulnerable young people can really get mired. I love to help clients break through those log jams and do preventive work to stop it from happening in the future."

The Alliance congratulates our long-time Legal Director, Laura Streimer, who recently became a Superior Court Commissioner.

Braun says she is grateful for Streimer's efforts in the position. She looks forward to working with the Alliance staff, clients, Board, community partners, and volunteers.

We welcome Dena Cook, E. Martin Estrada, and Andrew Garelick to the Alliance Board



Dena Cook is CEO of Brew, a corporate communications firm that helps technology and digital media

companies tell their stories. With offices in Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco and London, Brew works with founders and CEOs, providing guidance on business-critical communications issues, crisis situations and more. Cook also serves on the Los Angeles Mayor's Council of Technology and Innovation, and the Los Angeles Executive Committee of Human Rights Watch.



Munger, Tolles & Olson litigator and Los Angeles-based partner E. Martin Estrada has consistently been

involved in public interest work and pro bono representation, including helping to lead one of the largest educational-rights cases in the country and handling asylum matters for indigent immigrants. Previously, he led a program teaching fifth-graders at a Boyle Heights elementary school about the law, the justice system, and academic achievement.



Andrew Garelick is a corporate partner in Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom's Los Angeles office focusing on mergers

and acquisitions across a broad range of industries, including media and entertainment, retail, and technology. Throughout his legal career, Mr. Garelick has provided pro bono legal services to numerous charitable organizations in the Los Angeles community and serves on the Board of Governors of the Institute for Corporate Counsel.



L.A. OPPORTUNITY YOUTH COLLABORATIVE

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: PATHWAYS TO HIGHER ED



For young people in foster care, who often lack stability and consistent parenting, preparing for college and obtaining a degree can seem like insurmountable hurdles. That's where the work of the Opportunity Youth Collaborative, powered by the Alliance, comes in, bringing together a host of public and private organizations to improve systems and create pathways to success.

on linking the colleges to a new system called the Youth Coordinated Entry System," Petrass notes. "We have a housing shortage in Los Angeles, so the issue is a tough one. But we do have ways to improve how we connect students to available housing."

Data is one key to driving improvement. "Maybe one program for foster youth is doing well in terms of increasing GPA and another has great statistics about

"I've been meeting with the 29 college campuses in LA that have foster youth support programs and asking what's working, what's not?"

Under the OYC umbrella, John Burton Advocates for Youth (JBAY) and the LA Chamber of Commerce spearhead the Foster Youth College Achievement Program (FYCAP), an exciting multi-pronged approach to intervention at every level to improve how foster youth prepare for, access, and ultimately navigate higher education.

Jessica Petrass, project manager for JBAY, traverses the county, seeding community organizations in one place with the wisdom and experience gained somewhere else. "I've been meeting with the 29 campuses in LA that have foster youth support programs and asking what's working, what's not?" she says. Currently, each campus has its own approach to supporting foster youth, with its own services and requirements. This results in confusion for students who are trying to navigate their options.

Homelessness is a particularly complex issue identified as a barrier to higher education by every one of the colleges with which JBAY works. "I have been working

getting all of their student participants to complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). We want access to that kind of information," Petrass explains.

The task of creating pathways to college for students in foster care starts in high school or even earlier. With that in mind, the FYCAP team has brought together stakeholders, including Department of Child and Family Services and the LA County Office of Education, to make recommendations about ways to better serve students. Already, these recommendations have led to a pilot program in the Antelope Valley to leverage a core group of social workers to help students prepare for college and apply for financial aid. The pilot engages students as early as middle school.

For a child welfare system that tends to emphasize safety and secure placement over long-term goals like college and career, this work requires a shift in culture. Petrass sums it up: "Attaining higher education and meaningful careers is part of well-being, so the work is very worthwhile."



ANNOUNCING THE ADVOCACY ACADEMY

powered by the Alliance for Children's Rights

The Advocacy Academy provides opportunities for anyone with firsthand experiences of foster care to help reform and improve the system.



Advocates and OYC Young Leaders: Jesse De La Cruz, Thomisha Rader, Demontea Thompson, Autumn Taylor, Florencia Valenzuela, Maria Serrano, Sheri Walker

In addition, the Academy will organize focus groups around important issues and disseminate findings to policy makers and community partners to help them better serve key populations, including relative caregivers, teen parents, and transition-age youth.

In fact, just recently, we convened a focus group of young parents who have been in foster care themselves. Among the many surprises? The parents spoke at length about the stress of taking public transportation to medical and other service appointments, describing how taking the train or bus with a young child often caused them to feel overwhelmed and unsafe. Their candid commentary is helping to inform innovative approaches to transportation for transition-age clients, particularly those with children.

Foster parents, including kin caregivers, are a key part of the Academy as well, and we will continue to leverage their involvement to promote policy change. For example, recently, one of our advocates, a grandmother

who stepped up to raise her granddaughter, helped us reach out to national policymakers. Her compelling firsthand account helped humanize abstract issues of federal funding and draw attention to the needs of relative caregivers.

In many ways, the Academy is the crystallization of the self advocacy we've been supporting since the beginning of our 25-year history. As we launch the Academy and expand the community of advocates, we hope that it will be a stone that causes outward ripples that continue to touch lives far and wide, until, together, we achieve a more just and equitable world for vulnerable young people.

To become part of the Advocacy Academy or to request speakers for an upcoming event, contact Advocacy@kids-alliance.org.

To support the Academy, become part of the Road to Justice campaign: kids-alliance.org/Justice.

If we want to truly understand how to improve foster care, we have to hear from young people and caregivers who have firsthand experience.

"I want to put humanity back into the way the system works," says Shari Walker, who was in foster care during her teenage years. She recounts how she felt physically protected but emotionally devastated by the experience.

"If I could change one thing, it would be separation of siblings," says Flo Valenzuela, who is entering her freshman year at UCLA this fall. "My brother and I were split up, and as a result, it took years to rebuild that relationship and it's still very difficult."

It is not enough to speak for vulnerable children and families; we must also ensure that they are invited to speak in settings where decisions that affect them are being made. That is why, for two decades, the Alliance has been bringing the insight and wisdom of those who

have direct personal experiences of foster care to bear on policy and reform.

Advocacy is a skill, and it takes practice and preparation. Toward that end, we are pleased to announce the Advocacy Academy, an Alliance initiative that provides training, professional development, speaking opportunities, and more to those with direct experience of foster care who want to be part of the advocacy community. Alliance staff and community experts in policy, communications, and collective impact will help to train and support the advocates. Our hope is to amplify the voices of all of those who are calling for change.

Participants have the opportunity to take part in formal and informal speaking opportunities. They can also write letters, contact lawmakers, participate in legislative visits, reach out to educators, and speak at business roundtables and conferences.



Grandmother and adoptive parent Cherie Weatherall



Milagro Torres and her children, Michaela and Milo, and Janet Muñoz and Javier Rodríguez with their daughter, Jade, took part in a recent focus group for clients who are parenting.

THANK YOU FOR MAKING OUR 25TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER A HUGE SUCCESS!

The Beverly Hilton was packed on the evening of March 16, 2017, with nearly 1,000 supporters and friends of the Alliance for Children's Rights who came to celebrate our 25th anniversary. Guests recognized National Champion for Children honoree and Alliance CEO Janis Spire and Francis M. Wheat honoree Austin Beutner. **Thanks to the outpouring of generosity and support, the dinner raised \$1.5 million for our children and families.**

Alliance clients Alan Radtke and Laura Sander shared their stories, reminding us of the life-changing impact of the Alliance over the past 25 years. Mandy Moore and Chrissy Metz, Golden-Globe nominated stars of the hit series *This Is Us*, kept the evening lively as our hosts, and a special musical performance by MUSE/IQUE brought the house down.

The dinner was co-chaired by board members Scott Edelman, Susan Friedman, Cliff Gilbert-Lurie, Leslie Gilbert-Lurie, Jamie Lichtman, Sue Naegle, Gary Newman, Rick Rosen, Phil Rudolph, Toni Schulman, and Chris Walther. Thank you to our amazing sponsors and guests for a memorable evening celebrating our advocacy. Learn more and see the full photo album at kids-alliance.org/dinner.



Jeanne Pritzker & Janis Spire



Susan Friedman & Austin Beutner



Yasmine Delawari Johnson, Jules Leyser, Janis Spire, Junely Merwin & Danika Charity



Noelle Wolf, Cliff & Leslie Gilbert-Lurie



Jill Jadon, Michelle Richman & Kymberly Marciano-Strauss



Nathan & Willie Garson, Mandy Moore & Chrissy Metz



Mandy Moore, Cliff Gilbert-Lurie & Rick Rosen



Scott Seidel, Brett Paul, Dan Limerick, Marc Korman, Jay Levine & Paul Haas



Toni Schulman & Judge Michael Nash (Ret.)



Aidan Saltz Burke, Susan Saltz, Pricilla & Jamie Halper



Phil Rudolph



Alan Radtke receives a standing ovation.



Alexis Ortiz, Janis Spire, Kimberly George, Jessica Chandler, Trayvon Walker & Barry Bartlett



Leslie Gilbert-Lurie, Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas & Austin Beutner



Board members Phil Rudolph, Nancy de Brier, Rick Rosen, Toni Schulman, Steve Marenberg, Yasmine Delawari Johnson, Mitch Kaplan, Janis Spire, Barbara Grushow, Trent Copeland, Leslie Gilbert-Lurie, Bob Woolway, Cliff Gilbert-Lurie, Pamela Soper & Susan Saltz

PRO BONO SPOTLIGHT

Richard Ochoa of Bryan Cave



“These are parents with big hearts and it’s so rewarding. When someone wants to make that kind of investment in kids, the least I can do is expedite it!”

Richard Ochoa, litigator at Bryan Cave LLP, represents everything that we treasure in our exceptional pro bono community. Ochoa has handled more than 70 adoption and guardianship cases over the past nine years. As a bilingual attorney, he is particularly valued by our Spanish-speaking clients.

“I remember going to Edelman Children’s Court for National Adoption Day the first time,” he recalls. “It was a great experience. That event did it for me. Getting to see the joy the parents experience as they build or expand their families through adoption is so satisfying. And it was interesting to see all of the many parts that go into bringing an adoption to completion.”

Ochoa notes that handling an adoption always gives him a sense of joy and energizes him to return to his core practice. “Litigation can be wearing,” he says. “I enjoy this work because I love being around families, I love the look on the faces of the kids and their parents when they realize they are now a family forever.”

Over the years, Ochoa has also experienced the pleasure of helping clients for whom he has already completed an adoption add another new family member. For example, one family that adopted a child with special needs returned to court with Ochoa a few years later for a second such adoption. “These are parents with big hearts and it’s so rewarding. When someone wants to make that kind of investment in kids, the least I can do is expedite it!”

Today, Ochoa likes to encourage more junior attorneys to get involved in Alliance pro bono work. “I tell them that if you are looking for a pro bono experience where you can help someone almost instantaneously, this is it. You can spend two or three years litigating a typical pro bono case, or in that same period of time, as an Alliance pro bono adoption attorney, you can help 20 families.”

Alliance pro bono attorneys donate 30,000 hours, worth \$12 million, every year to help us champion the needs of children and families. For information about pro bono volunteer opportunities, contact c.yacoub@kids-alliance.org



ICM MAKES A DIFFERENCE

ICM Partners have truly invested in the futures of our children. Led in their efforts by founding partner Chris Silbermann, ICM employees volunteer year-round to celebrate adoptions from foster care and support transition-age youth on their path to employment and independence.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Back to School Celebration | August 13, 2017 | Exposition Park

FRIENDS OF THE ALLIANCE

Friends of the Alliance is an auxiliary group of the Alliance for Children’s Rights.

Alliance clients will participate in the first Friends of the Alliance Back to School Celebration this summer. School-aged children will enjoy a fun-filled day of learning and activities at the Museum of Natural History, receive a backpack filled with school supplies, and have an opportunity to start the school year off with a helping hand from our dedicated volunteers. To sponsor or support, please contact Pamela Soper at Pamela.Soper@cbs.com.



19th Annual Tennis for Tots | September 23, 2017 | Los Angeles Tennis Club



Reserve your spot on the court for \$250

Catch us on the courts for a fun afternoon at the Los Angeles Tennis Club. Tennis for Tots has raised over \$1.4 million 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.



Board members Steven Marenberg and Mitch Kaplan.

Raising Baby | November 18, 2017 | Children’s Institute, Inc.



ALLIANCE OF MOMS

Alliance of Moms is an auxiliary group of the Alliance for Children’s Rights.

Raising Baby is the flagship event of the Alliance of Moms. This day of interactive workshops focuses on educating expecting and parenting youth about early brain development and child-rearing. The event provides access to a variety of resources through partner organizations including Children’s Institute, Project Fatherhood, Loom, Too Small to Fail, and others.



Kristen Bell, Kathryn Hahn, and Jordana Brewster in the playroom at Raising Baby.

8th Annual RIGHT to LAUGH Comedy Event | Fall 2017 | Avalon Hollywood



The Alliance’s night of comedy and cocktails has raised nearly \$2 million and featured some of the best in comedy including Jimmy Kimmel, Tig Notaro, Martin Short, Sarah Silverman and Bob Odenkirk. Join us in laughter for a great cause this fall.



Anthony Jeselnik on stage at 2016 RIGHT to LAUGH

For more information on upcoming events, contact Nora Gilbert-Hamerling at nora@kids-alliance.org or 213.368.6010.

POLICY UPDATE

Alliance debuts comprehensive guide aimed at getting more children into family settings

This year, one of the most sweeping reforms in the history of foster care in California went into effect. Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) emphasizes placing children in family homes whenever possible, rather than group homes. The Alliance has been deeply involved in providing guidance and leadership for counties across California, including Los Angeles, as they put CCR into practice.

The process of becoming an approved foster parent can be daunting. Families deciding to care for children in foster care need to be empowered—operating from a place of knowledge and not fear. The Alliance for Children's Rights and our partners at Children's Law Center, California Youth Connection, and Public Counsel, worked with county and state agencies to create a friendly, useful RFA guidebook to put families in the driver's seat. The guide provides a comprehensive



"The RFA Guide is an amazing collaborative accomplishment and we are grateful to the Alliance for leading the charge! We know it will help so many families step up to become caregivers."

*Karen D. Richardson, LCSW | Deputy Director
DCFS Juvenile Court Services and Adoptions Bureau*

CCR included the passage of two bills (with a third in the works this year) that fundamentally restructure the laws around how a family is approved to care for a child in foster care, what funding and services a child receives, and how decisions pertaining to the child and family are made. CCR also mandates specific parameters for how group home facilities and Foster Family Agencies must be licensed.

For the sweeping changes envisioned by CCR to succeed, more children, particularly those with special needs, must be placed in family settings, with reduced reliance on group homes. That means recruiting, training, and supporting more foster parents. That is where the new Resource Family Approval (RFA) process comes into play. RFA is the new standard process by which all foster parents are approved. It is meant to ensure that all potential foster parents, including relatives, are given an equal opportunity to step up and care for a child.

step-by-step process for navigating RFA, and includes forms, tools, and materials that a family needs to get through the process. It was developed with input from caregivers themselves, and has been endorsed and widely distributed by the County of Los Angeles and other partners statewide.

Already we are receiving great feedback. Sylvie de Toledo of Grandparents as Parents had this to say:

"The Resource Family Approval Guide is AMAZING. Hopefully it will minimize the uncertainty and scariness of dealing with the child welfare bureaucracy. Knowing what comes next in the process helps our grandparents-as-parents families so much. On behalf of all RFA families we send a huge thank you to all that helped this project come to fruition."

The Alliance plans to issue new editions of the RFA guide to keep it current in the coming months.

Find out more by joining our policy news list at kids-alliance.org/policy.

THANK YOU ALLIANCE OF MOMS

We are an alliance.
That means that we show up for one another.
We roll up our sleeves.
And we get things done.
As moms, we understand just how difficult today might be.
But we also know how much better we can make tomorrow.
Some say that becoming a mom is life-changing.
We say that it's world-changing.
We are an Alliance of Moms.
And the future is what we make it.

Learn more and get involved at allianceofmoms.org



The Alliance of Moms is a membership-based auxiliary group that supports the work of the Alliance for Children's Rights as part of the Healthy Teen Family program. The Alliance of Moms' mission is to break the intergenerational cycle of babies born to teens in foster care. The focus of their work is offering educational parenting programs and raising funds and awareness for pregnant and parenting teens in LA's foster care system.



3333 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 550
Los Angeles, CA 90010

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Los Angeles, CA
Permit #3487



Our Foster Care Awareness Month social media campaign spotlighted young adults like Thomisha Rader, OYC Young Leader and Peer Advocate at Children's Law Center, who speak about their experiences in foster care.

Find us on:    @KidAlliance

HOLIDAY ALBUM TO BENEFIT THE ALLIANCE



Just in time for the winter season, there will be a new holiday album! *A Blue Élan Christmas* includes classic Christmas favorites and original music from legendary and emerging artists like Rita Coolidge, Gerry Beckley, Jack Tempchin, Rusty Young, Janiva Magness, and many more. 100% of label profits from this album will benefit the Alliance for Children's Rights.

