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A MESSAGE FROM

BOARD CHAIR

CLIFF GILBERT-LURIE & JANIS SPIRE
CEO



“They saw, when we were too blind to see... a vision, that we thought was out of our reach!”

This was written by Darlene, a 20-year-old foster youth in our mentor program. You enabled us to give Darlene and many other young people a reason to reach for their dreams.

Children who have faced countless barriers, including growing up without parents to believe in them, often have a hard time envisioning a limitless future. When vulnerable youth step

inside our door, we believe in them, provide opportunities and over time they see the incredible strides they’ve made towards independence.

Unfortunately, there are thousands of foster children in Los Angeles who are disconnected from any kind of support network. To reconnect young people and help them complete their education and find gainful employment, the Aspen Institute’s Forum for Community Solutions has selected the Alliance to steer a multi-agency workforce collaborative with the goal of creating sustainable futures for foster youth (page 5).

This newsletter demonstrates the possibilities your investment creates—from 15 years of National Adoption Day (page 6) to a policy victory that will bring stability to thousands of families raising foster children (page 11). Thank you for fueling hope for vulnerable children.

Welcome to our New Board Members



Matthew Babrick is a Vice President in the Investment Management Division of Goldman, Sachs & Co. Matt is a graduate of the USC Marshall School of Business and serves on the board of the Anti-Defamation League.



Scott A. Edelman is a partner at Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher where he serves as the firm’s National Pro Bono Chair. Scott is a graduate of the U.C. Berkeley School of Law and serves on the board of Bet Tzedek.

23RD ANNUAL DINNER TO HONOR
YASMINE AND MATTHEW JOHNSON

The Alliance will present Yasmine Delawari Johnson and Matthew Johnson with the **National Champion for Children** Award at our 23rd Annual Dinner on Thursday, **March 12, 2015** at the Beverly Hilton. Matthew is a managing partner at Ziffren Brittenham LLP and his wife Yasmine is a philanthropist and political activist. Both are ardent advocates and mentors for vulnerable children in their community.

“Matt and Yasmine embody the spirit of our great city through their commitment to enriching the lives of young Angelenos,” said Mayor Eric Garcetti. “They are shaping the futures of our city’s youth and as their Mayor and friend I am eternally grateful.”

Dinner Chairs Leslie & Cliff Gilbert-Lurie, Sue Naegle, Rick Rosen, Susan Friedman and Toni M. Schulman are joined by Honorary Co-Chairs Los Angeles Mayor **Eric Garcetti** and First Lady **Amy Elaine Wakeland** in recognizing Yasmine and Matthew’s tenacious efforts to improve the lives of children in need. Matthew is a powerhouse lawyer who has negotiated ground breaking transactions in the media and entertainment industries with top-name clients, including Oprah Winfrey, Tyler Perry, Sacha Baron Cohen, Michael Strahan and Tyra Banks.

Yasmine recently produced the award-winning documentary *We Came Home*. She is a Zoo Commissioner for the City of Los Angeles. Together with Matthew, she sits on the Board of Advisors of the Foreign Policy Roundtable and they are the inaugural Patrons of A World At School. Yasmine is an Alliance Board Member and co-founded the “Alliance of Moms,” a corps of volunteer mothers who spearhead fundraising efforts and educational workshops designed to support foster youth.

In 2008, Matthew was the youngest person recognized by The Hollywood Reporter as one of the 100 Power Lawyers in the Entertainment Industry, and he has remained on that list every year since. Matthew has spent decades mentoring at-risk youth and is deeply involved in the Boys & Girls Club of America. He is a National Trustee and has served as Board President of clubs in South Central and Echo Park. Matthew is also a member of the board of the Los Angeles Urban League, The Next Generation and Common Sense Media.

Yasmine and Matthew are proud parents of Kailey, Nicolas, Maverick and Malala.



“All children deserve every opportunity for success. The Alliance is committed to helping children live like our own, which is why this recognition is such an esteemed honor.”

- Yasmine and Matthew



Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas to Receive Community Service Award

With much appreciation, the Alliance will recognize Mark Ridley-Thomas of the L.A. County Board of Supervisors with the 2015 Francis M. Wheat Community Service Award at our 23rd Annual Dinner. For two decades, the Supervisor has championed truth, justice and social change in his current role serving the Second District and as a Los Angeles City Councilmember, California State Senator and Assemblymember. Since taking office in 2008 on the L.A. County Board of Supervisors, he has been an outstanding champion for impoverished children and youth. His efforts to protect and brighten their futures led to the development of L.A. County’s Blue Ribbon

(cont. on page 9)

MORGAN LEWIS UNITES A FAMILY

and gives a youth the safety and stability to flourish in school



Jordan Davisson and Dan Grunfeld are part of the amazing Morgan Lewis team who go above and beyond for our clients. The firm even hosted our clients at a Dodger game thanks to Jason Komorsky and Kate McGuigan.

Maria grew up with loving grandparents, but was unexpectedly moved hundreds of miles away by her abusive mother. She was kept from school and often locked in a room. After reaching her breaking point, the high school student bravely fled. With the help of a friend, she contacted her grandparents who quickly offered to fly her home so they could care for her.

The grandparents promptly enrolled Maria in high school and secured her counseling to cope with deep trauma. The stability of her new home life enabled her to catch up to her 11th grade peers despite being several grade levels behind.

To provide safety and the best possible care, her grandparents needed permanent legal guardianship. The Alliance enlisted pro bono counsel from committed supporter, Morgan Lewis. Associate Jordan Davisson and partner Dan Grunfeld hit the ground running. By the time of the guardianship hearing, Maria had straight A's and her grandparents were so proud. They even brought an academic transcript and photo album of Maria's achievements to share with the judge.

"Being someone's voice as an advocate is huge. This young, wonderful woman now has a future. We are strongly supportive of the Alliance's work at all levels and are proud to be a collective team."

Everything seemed to be going smoothly during the hearing, until Maria's mother unexpectedly called in to court to object. Undeterred by the surprise objection, Jordan made an iron-clad argument that living with her grandparents was in Maria's best interest. She was thriving academically, had close friendships and felt confident in her future for the first time. The judge heard Jordan's arguments, saw Maria's progress and agreed that the guardianship should be granted.

Maria was recently invited on a trip to Washington, D.C. for exceptional students and is looking forward to college. Thank you, Morgan Lewis, for stepping in with relentless commitment and winning legal advocacy. This impressive young woman now has the security and stability from which to build a full and successful life.

Thank you Jordan, Dan and all of our longtime friends at Morgan Lewis!

GAME CHANGER FOR FOSTER YOUTH

Aspen Institute invests in their futures



The Aspen Institute's Forum for Community Solutions has selected the Alliance to spearhead a multi-agency collaborative to overcome system-wide barriers and improve education and employment outcomes for transition-age foster youth. The L.A. Opportunity Youth Collaborative (OYC) includes leaders from the L.A. Chamber of Commerce, workforce providers, L.A. Unified School District and the Department of Children and Family Services along with nonprofit organizations, colleges, employers and philanthropists.

"Imagine a community where K-12 and higher education leaders, foster care programs and the justice system, philanthropy and the private sector, all come together to build successful pathways for our forgotten youth."

- Melody Barnes, former director of the White House Domestic Policy Council

The OYC uses a collective impact model to leverage the many resources and programs currently existing and maximizes opportunities to build stable futures for foster and delinquency youth ages 16-24 with pathways to:

1. High school graduation or GED attainment
2. Postsecondary enrollment and credential completion
3. Workforce readiness and gainful employment

We appreciate the support of the Aspen Institute along with the Stuart Foundation, the Pritzker Foster Care Initiative, the Carl and Roberta Deutsch Foundation and the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation for investing in this work.

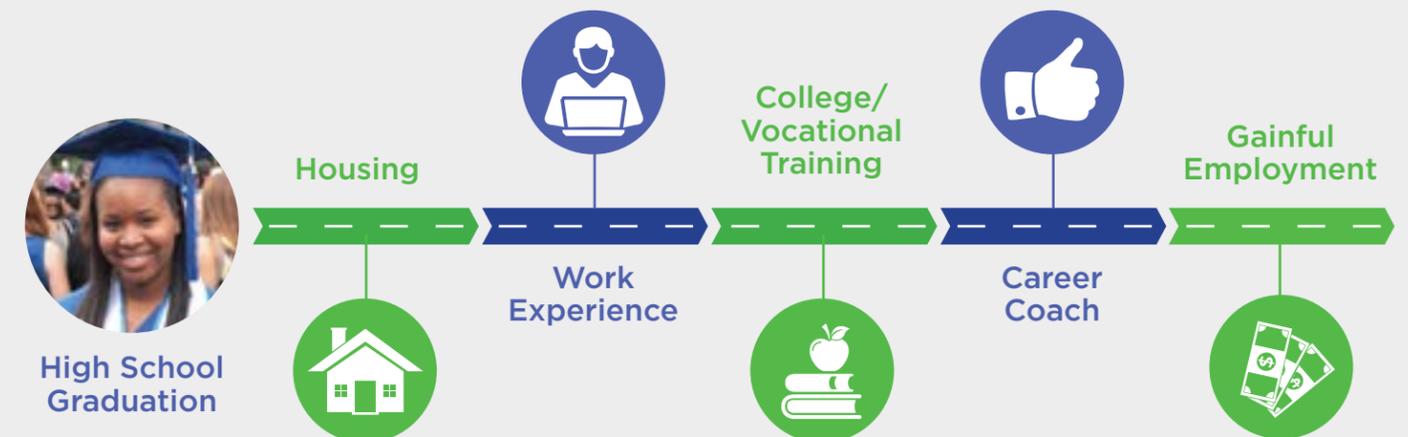
Introducing Carol Chodroff



We welcome the Alliance's Opportunity Youth Collaborative Director, Carol Chodroff. Carol brings a 20-year career working on behalf of court-involved youth as a high school teacher, public defender and legislative staffer in California and Washington, D.C.

"I look forward to working with the tremendous leadership of our partners to create sustainable futures for foster youth!"

PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS



15 YEARS OF FOREVER FAMILIES

celebrating a landmark National Adoption Day anniversary and the children whose lives we've changed and who've also changed ours

Imagine 54,000 children who are confident knowing they have a family to fall back on. Imagine thousands of siblings once separated now united through adoption with a loving family. Imagine teens and youth with special needs who thought the stability of a family was out of their reach, now having someone to call "mom" or "dad." This is what National Adoption Day is—it's a giant celebration of love and family. Did you know that it all started right here in Los Angeles?

Back in 1998, Juvenile Court Presiding Judge Michael Nash and the law firm Gibson, Dunn and Crutcher partnered with the Alliance, Public Counsel and the Department of Children and Family Services to clear Los Angeles' backlog of 10,000 foster care adoptions. The "Adoption Saturday" project flourished and an unprecedented number of adoptions have been finalized since then. Based on its success, the Alliance took the model nationally.

In 2000, the Alliance in collaboration with the Freddie Mac Foundation, Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, and Children's Action Network, launched National Adoption Day (NAD). That first year, the Alliance recruited nine cities, including L.A., New York City and Washington, D.C., to participate and over 1,100 adoptions were finalized. Today, over 400 cities in all 50 states take part in the event held annually the Saturday before Thanksgiving! NAD has become the most significant movement in U.S. history to create permanence for children in foster care.

Public awareness that has spurred action is NAD's crowning achievement. Now, individuals and families all over the country have stepped up to adopt. Big-hearted people from all walks of life provide the love and permanency all children deserve.

Each family's story is unique and beautiful, and here are just two that have remained part of our family throughout the years.

THE MAJOR FAMILY IN 2000 AND TODAY



THE MILNER FAMILY IN 2008 AND TODAY



Now a family — officially, forever

SANDY BANKS

This wasn't the first Thanksgiving that 12-year-old Dayana spent with Santos Magana's big, extended family. But this was the first time that she had something very specific to be thankful for.

Dayana is now, officially and forever, part of that family. Magana adopted her a week ago, turning a long-standing emotional tie into a legal bond.

Not that the technicality mattered much. "I've been



with him since I was a little girl. I called him Dad back then," Dayana said. "I didn't really let myself think about him not being my father."

She has lived with Magana, off and on, since she was a toddler and he began dating her mother. The couple had two daughters together, now 7 and 4. But Dayana's mother ran off, leaving him with all the children.

Magana is the only father she has ever known. Still, it took four years—dotted with legal hurdles, logistical problems and emotional setbacks—for Dayana to officially become his eldest daughter.

[See Banks, A&E]



"Family created not just by bloodlines...and built on the belief that every child has the right to a loving family."

- Sandy Banks, *Los Angeles Times*, Nov. 28, 2014

Total Number of NAD ADOPTIONS



54,000

Since 2000

Number of States

YEAR 1

8

NOW

50



Number of children in U.S. foster care

IN 2000

550,000

NOW

400,000

"Adopting my daughters was the best thing that ever happened to me!"

-Sophia Kuzia
(adoption pictured above, left)

TRIBUTE TO A VISIONARY LEADER

Juvenile Court Presiding Judge Michael Nash retires, leaving behind an unprecedented legacy in child welfare reforms



Judge Michael Nash and the Kuzia family at National Adoption Day in 2011.



Judge Nash hugs the Rodriguez children at court in 2007.

The Alliance pays tribute to Judge Michael Nash and thanks him for his spectacular leadership that transformed lives and brightened futures for countless vulnerable children throughout Los Angeles County and beyond. During his decades of service as Presiding Judge of the Los Angeles Juvenile Court, Judge Nash championed many innovative reforms to ensure that the safety and wellbeing of foster children remains front and center as priorities in our nation's largest and most overburdened child welfare system.

His impact reaches far beyond a national model for foster care adoptions. He created processes to better supervise and support foster youth who are at risk of becoming entangled in the juvenile delinquency system. He instituted protocols to ensure that children in care are not unnecessarily treated with psychotropic medications, and made it his mission to reduce the reliance on institutional group home settings to care for them. In response to the dismal academic outcomes of foster children, Judge Nash established an attorney panel to advocate for needed special education services as well as information sharing protocols between school and court systems. He did all of this, and much more, with a fierce belief that we must and can do better for at-risk children and youth.

As he retires, Judge Nash leaves behind a much improved child welfare system—one that has inspired comparable practices across the country. He also leaves behind many people and community partners who had the honor and privilege of working with and for him. While he will be missed, we welcome and look forward to working with the newly appointed presiding judge, the Honorable Michael Levanas.

PAST EVENTS

16th Annual Tennis for Tots



On Saturday, September 20, 2014, Board member Mitch Kaplan and the Kaplan Stahler Agency hosted the 16th Annual Tennis for Tots Tournament at the historic Los Angeles Tennis Club. Dozens of players came out to the courts to support Los Angeles kids and to

honor the memory of David and Lynn Angell who tragically died on September 11, 2001. The round robin doubles tournament raised more than \$100,000 and participants took home a range of impressive auction items donated by local companies. A huge thank you to our sponsors City National Bank, Los Angeles Tennis Club, O'Melveny & Meyers LLP, Public IDentity and to all of our players and donors for their generous contributions.



Hosts Mitch Kaplan and Elliot Stahler with Justin Gimelstob (center).



One of the generous players takes a swing.



Board members Bart Williams and Leslie Gilbert-Lurie.

11th Annual "All-In" for Kids Celebrity Poker Tournament



The Commerce Casino's 11th Annual 'All-in' for Kids Celebrity Poker Tournament was held Sunday, October 19, 2014. Event founder and co-chair Kathy Meherin, along with generous participants and fellow co-chairs Shelli Azoff, John Schulman and Suzanne Todd truly went 'All-In' for L.A.'s most vulnerable children and helped raise over

\$125,000. Thank you to title sponsor City National Bank, along with the Diane & Dorothy Brooks Foundation, Shelli & Irving Azoff, Peter Benedek, Hillary Bibicoff & Jim Puerer, Dawn DeNoon, Robert Lichtenstein, Ana-Marie Stern, Vin Di Bona Productions and Ken Ziffren.



Final table fronted by Kathy Meherin.



Actors Willie Garson and Camryn Manheim having fun.

LET YOUR DONATION GO FURTHER

simple ways to enable your dollars to do more for local kids in need

Corporate Matching

Do you know if your company has a corporate matching program? Many companies will match donations their employees make to charities. Ask your HR department and you could double, or even triple, the impact of your contribution.

Employee Giving Programs

Employee giving programs allow employees to designate a charity every month to receive a donation through an automatic payroll deduction. Check if your employer has such a program and ask if you can designate the Alliance for Children's Rights.

Monthly Giving

Can we count on you? Turn your generous donations into a reliable thread by donating monthly. It's easy. Monthly donations allow the Alliance to plan for the future. **Just make a donation online and check the box for 'monthly contribution' or put it in the return envelope.**

These corporate partners have identified the Alliance as their preferred charity.

LIONSGATE



IECP
Inclusive Education & Community Partnership

Learn more and sign up at support.kids-alliance.org

November Ignites Foster Youth

November might have been National Adoption Month, but it was also a time for the Alliance to host events for older youth preparing to age out of the foster care system without a family. Events included Survival Saturday, Thanksgiving for Transition-Age Youth and an empowerment workshop series led by the Junior League of Los Angeles. These hands-on engagements inspired youth to dream big, work hard and renew their hope for a better future.



Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas (cont. from page 3)

Commission to improve child welfare practices. He has been front and center in efforts to put an end to child sex trafficking, and to enable youth transitioning from foster care to become self-sufficient and thrive as young adults. A hands-on Supervisor, he opened his offices last year to an 18-year-old foster youth with political aspirations for a job shadow day sponsored by the Alliance. The Honorable Ridley-Thomas is also widely regarded for his establishment of the Empowerment Congress in 1992, which remains a very active forum in Los Angeles for citizen activism to improve local communities. The Alliance commends Supervisor Ridley-Thomas' dedication and service to children and our community.



YOUTH VOICES FROM CAPITOL HILL

two former foster youth share their summer experience in Washington, D.C.

A Q&A with Howard University senior and Alliance alum Dominique Freeman



Q Where did you intern this summer?

A I was a foster youth intern in Representative Karen Bass' office as part of the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute (CCAI).

Q What was the most exciting part of your internship?

A I remember this vividly. I started interning in Rep. Bass' office right after she finished Foster Youth Shadow Day. I was amazed to see the action, organization and bipartisanship happening in congress around foster youth.

Q What was the most challenging part of interning?

A Breaking my silence and being completely open and vocal about my foster care experience. I came to understand that talking about my past could ensure that other youth could have a better experience.

Q What did you learn about yourself while interning?

A I am powerful. I have the power to voice injustices and the power to influence and encourage others. This summer's internship taught me that power was inside of me the entire time.

Q What did you learn about the government during your internship?

A There can be big gaps between written laws and what actually happens. I know firsthand that a law doesn't always trickle down into practice. For example, I aged out without a birth certificate or social security number. According to the law, this shouldn't happen. A law has to be implemented and upheld to make an impact in someone's life. Luckily, organizations like the Alliance exist to help youth like me.

The Essence of Advocacy by Alain Datcher



I was educated in the art of advocacy this summer. My classroom was Washington, D.C. and my teachers were the leaders of the Young Women's Project. My assignment was to train and support self-advocates: a team of young adult leaders committed to improving their lives and transforming their communities.

For six weeks I labored to improve the housing, employment and educational conditions facing these youth. I heard

their stories and read about their experiences in homeless shelters and foster homes. How could I train them to be self-advocates? I knew before I could tell these young people to speak and advocate hope, they had to discover their voice.

But first, they had to shift their perspective. I had to remind them they had a voice, linked to their personal narratives. I saw them as experts of experience with the ability to inform policymakers with their first-hand knowledge. They could articulate the problems plaguing homeless and disconnected youth in Washington, D.C. like no one else.

Establishing a foundation for self-advocacy is difficult in six weeks. I realized training self-advocates isn't the molding of wills, but rather the formation of ideals. I witnessed this and it shattered my own misconceptions about advocacy. This summer left me with a renewed passion and a better understanding of the essence of advocacy. I am forever changed.

POLICIES PROMOTE STABILITY

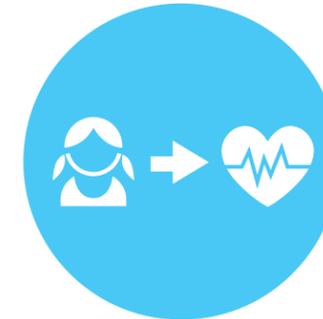
three victories will strengthen families and improve outcomes for toddlers to teens



Long-overdue equity for relatives

This past year, the Step Up Coalition, led by the Alliance, succeeded in securing California's commitment to better support foster children placed with relatives. Although California law prioritizes relative placements, the state has historically provided them with far less financial support as compared to foster children living with non-relatives. On the heels of a campaign by the Step Up Coalition to level the playing field, Governor Brown established the Approved Relative Caregiver Funding Option Program (ARC) fund for use by counties to better support these families. Proceeds from the fund will become available to counties in 2015. This victory will improve the ability of relatives to care for their young kin when parents no longer can. It will also reduce the need to rely on expensive group homes where it is undisputed that children don't fare nearly as well.

Thank you to the Walter S. Johnson, Zellerbach and Annie E. Casey Foundations for supporting our relative caregiver work.



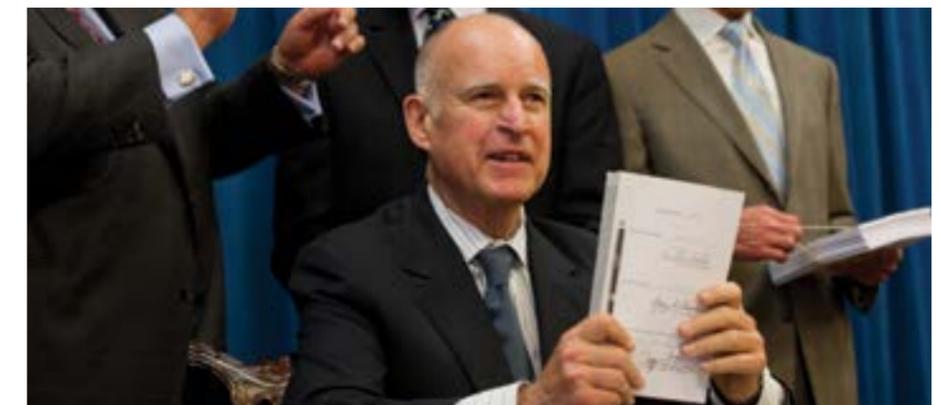
Speedy developmental services for young children

The Alliance co-sponsored AB 1089 to remedy the disruption in therapies foster children often experience when they move homes. Specifically, California's Regional Centers provide services to address developmental delays and disabilities children face. But when a foster child changes homes, until the enactment of AB 1089, there was nothing to ensure that their therapeutic plan was promptly resumed at the new Regional Center in their area. Long delays in treatment caused children to regress in areas like speech and motor skills, and threatened home stability. AB 1089 establishes clear timelines so that children will have services in place soon after moving.



Safety net to age 21 when adoptions or guardianships fail

AB 2454, co-sponsored by the Alliance, allows a youth to re-enter foster care until age 21 in the unfortunate situation when an adoptive parent or guardian can no longer provide for him/her. Youth in this situation are eligible so long as they were 16 or older when they were first adopted or entered guardianship from foster care. AB 2454 provides these vulnerable youth with financial support and housing while they work towards education or vocational goals in order to become independent and self-sufficient.





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Rite Aid KidCents
kidcents.riteaid.com



Sign up for Rite Aid Wellness+ online and select the Alliance as your charity and all purchases can round up to the nearest dollar in support of L.A. kids.

**Ralphs Community
Contribution Program**
Ralphs.com



Are you a Ralphs shopper? Enroll your Ralphs card in the Community Contribution Program and a percentage of your grocery bill will be donated to the Alliance.

SAVE THE DATE!

March 12, 2015
23rd Annual Dinner



Join us at the Beverly Hilton to honor Yasmine and Matthew Johnson and Sup. Mark Ridley-Thomas.

May 2015
6th Annual the RIGHT to LAUGH



A night full of laughter with comedic legends.

Visit kids-alliance.org for details.

