B4UGO: A Lifeline for Foster Youth 6

Pro Bono Gives Family New Life 4

A New Legion of Leaders 5

Alliance of Moms 9

Medical-Legal Partnership a Win-Win for Kids 10

Annual Dinner Honors Dana Walden & Gary Newman 3
2015 brought significant change and hope for the children we serve, as we’ve been joined by new partners in our mission.

We frequently hear from our clients “It takes a village to raise a child,” and it’s true. At-risk kids and families impacted by the foster care system need our relentless advocacy and the support of mentors, teachers, counselors and superstar social workers and attorneys.

The L.A. Opportunity Youth Collaborative continues to grow the number of youth who are job ready and on a career path. Their efforts are bolstered by the Alliance’s own “Know Before You Go” campaign, which now includes a website and YouTube channel (pg. 6).

The Alliance of Moms continues to build membership, momentum and importance at the Alliance. Their inspiring work is capturing the attention of the public and the hearts of more than 100 member volunteers!

We look forward to celebrating with you at our upcoming 24th Annual Dinner on March 10. We are delighted to be honoring two prominent entertainment executives in our community, Dana Walden and Gary Newman, as well as the esteemed Superintendent of the Pomona School District, Richard Martinez.

Thank you for being a part of our village and a shining beacon of hope for the children we serve!

The Alliance will present Fox Television Group chairmen and CEOs Dana Walden and Gary Newman with the National Champion for Children Award at our 24th Annual Dinner on Thursday, March 10, 2016 at the Beverly Hilton. Dana and Gary are a powerful entertainment duo who use their influence to improve the lives of at-risk children, fight poverty and strengthen access to healthcare.

“Throughout my career Dana and Gary have impressed me with their leadership skills and creative talent, but what truly sets them apart is their commitment to people in need,” said Rick Rosen. “They have heart, tenacity and a willingness to stand up for those less fortunate. They truly walk the walk. I can’t think of two people more deserving of this award.”

Dinner Chairs Leslie & Cliff Gilbert-Lurie, Sue Naegle, Susan Friedman and Toni M. Schulman are joined by Honorary Co-Chairs Peter Rice, Rick Rosen and Chase Carey in recognizing Dana and Gary’s commitment to underserved children and positively impacting their local community.

When the two are not making hit television shows such as “Modern Family,” “Homeland,” “American Horror Story” and “Empire,” they spend much of their time and energy bettering the world around them. Gary is a member of the L.A. Board of Governors of the Paley Center for Media and serves on the boards of the Hollywood Radio & Television Society, Chrysler and UCLA’s Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center Foundation. Dana also is an active board member of UCLA’s Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center Foundation, as well as the Los Angeles Zoo and Saban Free Clinic.

“Every child in our community deserves the opportunity to live a healthy and happy life. It is such a privilege to be honored by the Alliance, which has positively affected the lives of so many children and young people in Los Angeles.”

- Dana and Gary

James Lichtman Joins Alliance Board

James Lichtman is Executive Vice President & Deputy General Counsel for NBCUniversal. Jamie has served on the boards of the Los Angeles Foundation and the Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center Foundation. Dana also is an active board member of UCLA’s Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center Foundation, as well as the Los Angeles Zoo and Saban Free Clinic.

Supt. Richard Martinez Recognized with Community Service Award

Trailblazing education leader Richard Martinez, Superintendent of the Pomona Unified School District, will receive the Alliance’s 2015 Francis M. Wheat Community Service Award at our 24th Annual Dinner. Martinez is known as a champion for collaboration, urban education and foster children. He was recently selected by the U.S. Department of Education as one of 100 top school leaders in America. Martinez is an education pioneer. He successfully integrated digital learning throughout his district, which resulted in awards for technological innovation (cont. on page 4)
**A NEW LEGION OF LEADERS**

foster youth step up to lead and empower their peers

It was an active summer for the dozens of organizations that make up the L.A. Opportunity Youth Collaborative (OYC). This multi-agency partnership of public and private organizations is focused on improving education, employment and life outcomes for foster youth.

On July 1, OYC Summer Youth Ambassadors attended a press conference that kicked off summer youth employment programs, hosted by Mayor Eric Garcetti and the L.A. County Board of Supervisors.

The Summer Youth Ambassadors are a group of former foster youth supported by OYC partner United Friends of the Children, who worked in YouthSource Centers around the county to recruit foster youth to the summer job programs. They also support youth through the application process.

Throughout the summer and fall, foster youth participated in job shadowing, attended recruitment events and were hired into temporary and full time jobs. Through these efforts, foster youth gained valuable work experience, polished their resumes and acquired the soft skills to advance in their journeys toward school and career.

**WILMERHALE DRAMATICALLY-shifts family’s future**

a grandmother’s journey from hopelessness to homeowner

Linda had an empty nest when she got a call from a social worker. Her adult daughter was suffering from postpartum psychosis and Linda’s three grandchildren had been put into foster care. Linda immediately agreed to care for them and was told she’d have support and resources to help her do so. Soon after, she was incorrectly informed that she did not qualify. Without financial support, the family was soon homeless, relying on the generosity of relatives for food and shelter. Without a consistent home address, Linda couldn’t find work and without a stable home, the children found it hard to keep up in school.

Linda struggled for seven long years to keep the family together and to meet their basic needs. She pleaded for some help but was denied. Her case came to the attention of the Alliance, and in stepped WilmerHale pro bono attorney Jessica Kurzban. Jessica and the WilmerHale team filed an appeal, and the judge found that the county had failed to provide proper funding and support for Linda’s grandchildren. He awarded the appropriate benefits, along with a back payment of $70,000 for the many years of lost financial support to which the family had been entitled.

Linda’s and the children’s lives changed dramatically as a result of that award. Linda was able to buy a modest home, find a job and enroll the kids in after school activities while she was at work. The children are now flourishing and succeeding in school.

**Supt. Richard Martinez Recognized with Community Service Award** (cont. from page 5)

in early childhood education from the California School Boards Association. A native of East Los Angeles, Martinez began his career in crisis intervention for the Bell Gardens Police Department before shifting his community-driven career focus to education. In 2009, he was made Superintendent of Schools and this year celebrated his 28th year in education.

The Alliance commends Supt. Martinez for dedicating his career to shaping the futures of children, including those impacted by the foster care system. His commitment to innovation and student achievement stands as a model.

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**Jessica Kurzban, WilmerHale**

*“These cases bring immediate gratification because you can see the positive change happen that has direct impact on a family’s life and basic needs.”*

**Jessica Kurzban, WilmerHale**

*“The most rewarding part of my job is the excitement I see from youth once they are told they can start work.”*

- Keisha Solis, Summer Youth Ambassador
Alliance Feature

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO: A LIFELINE FOR FOSTER TEENS
innovating and expanding our reach through YouTube, an app and the web

What do 18 year olds need to know before they go out into the world of independent living, college and career? Just about everything, especially if they haven't had a consistent parent or caregiver to teach them how (not) to spend money, rent an apartment or make a good impression on a job interview.

In 2012, California’s Fostering Connections to Success Act (AB 12) went into effect, providing foster youth with three more years of support and housing until age 21. To make the most of the extra three years, the Alliance and Children’s Law Center joined forces to support youth in pursuit of their goals and independent adulthood. We talked to foster youth, heard what they needed and got them to coin a campaign. “Know Before You Go” was born to empower youth to become their own advocates armed with the knowledge and information they need to succeed in work, school and life.

In early 2013, a rich set of printed materials with information to support transition-age youth was released in courtrooms and group homes across Los Angeles and the state. When we saw how popular and effective the packets were, we knew we had to expand and improve accessibility. We needed an app.

“I wish these videos were around when I was 18. No one understood how much I needed this information.”
– Clay, 24

The one thing youth consistently have with them everywhere they go is their phone. In 2014, we released a smart phone app with GPS mapping, so users could easily spot the resources and services they needed closest to them. The app is valued by local teens and organizations as an innovative model for serving foster youth. Next we needed a website and YouTube videos.

This year, we are taking Know Before You Go to the next level of innovation with a YouTube channel. The Know Before You Go YouTube web series is created by foster youth with a mix of quick, fun segments in a talk show format. Former foster youth give tips on finding and keeping a job, dealing with roommates, coping with campus life and more.

Episodes include subject matter experts and special guests. They are created by nonprofit partner ManifestWorks, which trains foster and probation youth to learn the nuts and bolts of entertainment industry careers.

In October 2015, we launched a website, knowb4ugo.org, which contains all the information and resources of the campaign. Each episode pushes viewers to the site which also links to other helpful sites and resources around the community.

Know Before You Go has grown into a widespread campaign that empowers youth with the information they need to become leaders of their lives.

Watch, read and learn more at: knowb4ugo.org, follow @knowb4ugola on Twitter and use #knowb4ugo

Avan Jogia (far left), star of Spike TV’s series Tut with youth hosts (left to right) Kookie, Eric, Barry and Marisa.
PAST EVENTS

17th Annual Tennis for Tots

The 17th Annual Tennis for Tots was held at the historic Los Angeles Tennis Club on September 19. We had a tremendous showing of support with $80,000 raised for children in foster care. Participants played in the round robin doubles tournament, which honors the memory of David and Lynn Angell, and was generously hosted for the 17th year by board member Mitch Kaplan and Elliot Stahler of the Kaplan and Stahler Agency. A big thank you to sponsors City National Bank, Los Angeles Tennis Club and all of the players.

12th Annual ‘All-In’ for Kids Celebrity Poker Tournament

For the 12th year, friends and supporters showed up to have some fun while helping kids at the Commerce Casino’s ‘All-In’ for Kids Celebrity Poker Tournament on October 18. The action was non-stop as Texas hold’em players and generous sponsors raised a record high of $145,000 for Alliance clients. Thank you to title sponsor City National Bank, event founder and co-chair Kathy Meherin along with Shelli Azoff, Suzanne Todd and John Schulman.

17th Annual Tennis for Tots

A new group of passionate volunteers is bolstering the work of the Alliance. It started with five women who shared a big dream: To meaningfully impact vulnerable foster youth by leveraging what they’ve learned as new moms. The Alliance of Moms (AOM) came to life and has taken flight quickly through the leadership of Alliance Board Member Yasmine Delawari Johnson, Danika Charity, Jules Leyser, Emily Lynch and Kelly Zajfen.

AOM is a membership-based auxiliary group with a mission to mobilize a community of volunteers that values and fights for our children in foster care.

With 75% of girls in foster care experiencing a pregnancy by the age of 21, AOM feels a natural affinity for this vulnerable population. Recognizing that pregnant and parenting foster teens have not had the benefit of parenting role models, AOM hosts educational events and activities that provide young moms and dads with practical tools and information. Parents are empowered to give their babies a healthier childhood than their own.

Anyone can become a member, and people with and without children are encouraged to participate. Membership is $250 annually and members are invited to volunteer for AOM events including their flagship event Raising Baby, held twice per year. Each Raising Baby focuses on infant care, early brain development and dealing with the stresses that come with parenting. Foster teens bring their babies and learn invaluable information.

Other AOM programs include:

• Giant Playdate family fundraiser for members and foster families, held annually
• Mom’s Night Out evenings that recruit and educate members through a speaker series addressing issues facing foster youth, held monthly
• Mommy & Me and Nutritional Cooking classes for pregnant and parenting foster youth living at St. Anne’s residential facility

Alliance of Moms partners include The Honest Company, Ergo, Heirloom LA, The Mama Circle, Too Small To Fail Initiative, CII and Echo Parenting.

Learn more by visiting allianceofmoms.org and follow along on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram (@allianceofmoms).

ALLIANCE OF MOMS
making a difference is an imperative for a new generation of volunteers
DOCTORS AND LAWYERS A WIN-WIN FOR FOSTER CHILDREN
1,500 children served through medical-legal partnership

In 2012, the Alliance partnered with the Violence Intervention Program under the leadership of Dr. Astrid Heger at L.A. County + USC Medical Center to improve the long-term health and wellbeing of foster children. Our medical-legal partnership, which exclusively serves children in foster care, is the first of its kind in the country. Known as the Children’s Health and Advocacy Clinic, this partnership has reached more than 1,500 vulnerable children.

Working alongside doctors, we advocate for solutions that have a longstanding impact on a child’s wellbeing while providing critical support and guidance to the child and caregiver. The clinic has enhanced our efforts and given the doctors a partner in overcoming barriers to children’s health. We advocate earlier when disorders like Fetal Alcohol Syndrome are first recognized and are able to resolve issues related to child development, dental care and placement stability that might otherwise go unaddressed.

Medical-Legal Impact: Jackson’s Story

As a baby, Jackson spent his days in a makeshift crib with a baby bottle full of Pepsi. He entered foster care at 18 months, his teeth so rotten they had to be removed. Without his front teeth, Jackson’s speech was delayed and his doctors became concerned when they learned the dentist had no plans to provide a pediatric implant. After working our way up the chain of command, our pressure prompted the provider to give Jackson the baby dentures free of charge. This prevented a host of developmental delays and emotional issues that would have put Jackson way behind his peers. He entered preschool with a confident toothy grin! In April, the Alliance had the privilege to complete Jackson’s adoption with his new, adoring family.

Together with our medical partners, we stand as a model for other medical-legal partnerships in Southern California and across the country.

New Reforms To Reduce Group Care Must Address Needs of Family Placements

California is committed to reducing the number of children who grow up in group homes and ensuring that every child is raised in a family. AB 403 (Stone), recently signed by the Governor, is the first of a series of reforms designed to support families so that fewer children grow up in these institutional environments. The Alliance is working intensely to ensure that AB 403 is implemented in a way that is mindful of the needs of relative caregivers and ensures that these families access the same benefits, supports and services that are provided in non-relative placements.

POLICIES MOVE FORWARD
promoting education success and family homes

Education Success

On October 11, 2015, AB 379 (Gordon) was passed, which allows foster youth to enforce their educational rights, such as the choice to remain in their school of origin, to receive partial credits and to graduate using the state minimum standards. Until now, youth had no mechanism to enforce these rights when the district failed to comply with the laws. AB 379 allows foster children to use the Department of Education’s Uniform Complaint Procedure, which will in turn help boost academic outcomes for vulnerable students.

The Alliance’s new Foster Youth Education Toolkit also promises to improve foster youths’ performance in school by providing a blueprint for creating education programs specifically for foster children and their unique needs. The Alliance and our partners are hosting a series of webinars highlighting the toolkit available at kids-alliance.org/edtoolkit.

Pregnancy Prevention Institute Adopts L.A. Model for Pregnant and Parenting Teens

The Alliance and Public Counsel developed a successful intervention to give parenting foster youth access to the resources and services needed to parent successfully and stay on track for healthy independence. The Pregnant and Parenting Teen Conference model, created with the L.A. Department of Children and Family Services and Children’s Law Center, was recently adopted by four counties across the state. Alliance Social Worker Barbara Facher recently trained twelve more counties at the California Foster Youth Pregnancy Prevention Institute. The success of the program in L.A. has impacted hundreds of teens, helping them to be good parents, break the cycle of abuse and neglect and prevent future pregnancies. A new resource - teenparent.net - is now available for these young people.
Know Before You Go YouTube Channel + knowb4ugo.org

Introducing a web series for foster youth created by foster youth. The web series and website are designed to empower youth to become their own advocates, armed with the knowledge and resources they need to succeed in work, school and life. Visit knowb4ugo.org or @knowb4ugola for more information.

SAVE THE DATE!

March 10, 2016
24th Annual Dinner
Join us at the Beverly Hilton to honor Fox’s Dana Walden and Gary Newman.

TBD 2016
7th Annual
the RIGHT to LAUGH
A night full of giggles and generosity.

Visit kids-alliance.org for more details and tickets.