This is Cliff Gilbert-Lurie’s first joint letter as the new Chairman of the Alliance Board of Directors. The Alliance is thankful for the tremendous leadership and vision of outgoing Board Chair Bart Williams.

We are running on a flood of energy and motivation on the heels of our incredibly successful 22nd Annual Dinner celebration on April 7 and the RIGHT TO LAUGH comedy event on May 29 (see pages 8 - 10). The outpouring of financial and in-kind support we’ve received from the community will be vital to our ongoing programs and initiatives. The outpouring of resources and enthusiasm we’ve received as we support the academic standing of vulnerable youth and other at-risk groups) will receive additional resources to bolster the academic standing of vulnerable students. Alliance representatives are diligently “pounding the pavement” to make sure the funds are allocated appropriately, so more foster youth graduate high school and advance to college or vocational school.

Every day, your support opens doors of opportunity for disadvantaged children so they can dream big. Thank you for helping us to keep those big dreams alive.

2013 Programs at a Glance

(7,611 children served)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adoption and Adoption Support</td>
<td>1,014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guardianship</td>
<td>546</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education and Early Childhood</td>
<td>1,494</td>
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<tr>
<td>Benefits and Special Needs</td>
<td>1,050</td>
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<tr>
<td>Healthcare</td>
<td>521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NextStep: Transition Age Youth</td>
<td>1,950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1,036</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A MESSAGE FROM

BOARD CHAIR
CLIFF GILBERT-LURIE &
CEO JANIS SPIRE

under the Affordable Care Act (ACA) to age 26. ACA now enables young adults to stay on their parents’ insurance plan, but foster youth have no parents making it critical that they access this benefit. The Alliance is actively enrolling youth, so they have a five-year health safety net.

The Alliance has also taken a lead in ensuring new legislation will close the education achievement gap for California’s more than 60,000 foster youth. Through this reform, schools (with a large percentage of foster youth and other at-risk groups) will receive additional resources to bolster the academic standing of vulnerable students. Alliance representatives are diligently “pounding the pavement” to make sure the funds are allocated appropriately, so more foster youth graduate high school and advance to college or vocational school.

Every day, your support opens doors of opportunity for disadvantaged children so they can dream big. Thank you for helping us to keep those big dreams alive.

NEW PARTNERSHIPS PROMISE STRONGER CONNECTIONS

for Native American children in foster care

The Alliance recently launched a partnership with the Juvenile Court to reach Native American foster children. Judge Amy Pellman presides over the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) court, which sees upwards of 200 cases involving Native American youth each year. Our collaboration, made possible by the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, allows us to meet and screen children coming through Judge Pellman’s court. In addition to advocating for the children’s education, healthcare and financial supports and services, we are also working to identify and build relationships with culturally sensitive community providers.

Like all children in foster care, Native American children need stability, access to early and special education, quality medical and mental healthcare, and for older youth, mentors, housing and transition services. But this population faces additional obstacles, including a shortage of Native American foster homes and culturally conscious service providers. While under L.A. County jurisdiction, many of these youth live in neighboring counties such as San Bernardino and Riverside where resources can be scarcer and where they are further away from social workers and court-appointed attorneys. Through this collaboration, we advocate for services across county lines. And when children reunify with their birth parents, we will continue to provide the tools they need to be successful at home.

The Alliance is also working with the United American Indian Involvement (UAII) to identify social service providers and make them more accessible to Native American families. We are building on an existing Native American services directory by calling on our partners to join and to participate in cultural awareness training led by UAII. While Native American youth have always been a part of Alliance caseloads, we are committed to growing these partnerships so more children are poised for long-term success.

Blue Ribbon Commission Roadmap to Change Lives Now

Los Angeles County’s Blue Ribbon Commission on Child Protection released its final report on April 11 calling for a transformation of the child protection system. This includes creating a single entity responsible for all child welfare services throughout multiple county agencies. The report calls for better support for foster children who are placed with relatives—an issue the Alliance is championing statewide (see page 12). The report also calls for greater transparency, accountability and data sharing as well as improved education stability for foster youth. The County Board of Supervisors adopted these reforms, and we look forward to playing a role in their implementation. Visit blueribboncommissionla.com.
2014 CHILDREN’S JUSTICE COUNCIL
honor firms who go above and beyond for impoverished and abused children and youth

The Alliance is thrilled to recognize firms whose extraordinary pro bono commitment improves the lives of our community’s most vulnerable children. These firms have donated the most hours to the Alliance in addition to building special practices, affecting statewide policy and providing significant resources to sustain our work. We honor these firms as our inaugural Children’s Justice Council, a new distinction to be awarded annually.

GIBSON DUNN
Gibson has been there for our clients since the beginning. They were instrumental in creating the Alliance’s Adoption Program and helped finalize thousands of foster care adoptions. Gibson also helps achieve stability for adoptive families. They successfully litigated a landmark case so adoptive parents receive benefits based on a disabled child’s needs. In addition, Gibson advocates for education rights. They are working on a first-of-its-kind impact project, training schools on partial credit laws. For foster youth who move constantly, this groundwork will make high school graduation a reality, instead of an impossible dream.

LATHAM & WATKINS LLP
Latham is a pro bono powerhouse, donating thousands of hours each year. Latham attorneys create families through adoption and guardianship, stabilize families with public benefits and support children by advocating for education. Latham also helped develop two new initiatives to assist children. They were the first firm to take on a large volume of special education cases and to advocate for early childhood development services. They are also piloting a new program to obtain child care benefits for children in need. With each issue, Latham develops extensive internal expertise and displays a deep commitment to our practice areas.

O’MELVENY & MYERS LLP
O’Melveny has a long history of advocating for children across many of our programs, including guardianship, adoption and public benefits. They have successfully litigated numerous benefits cases, ensuring children have support for basic needs. When family members were denied the right to care for relative foster children, O’Melveny attorneys filed suit to protect their rights. O’Melveny’s action led to the creation of a new state hearing process for relatives, allowing children to stay with a loving family member instead of in a foster or group home. Each year, this system-wide fix helps hundreds of families create stable homes for their kin.

Manatt attorneys are true champions for children’s stability and improvements in public policy. They collaborate to identify innovative approaches to pro bono advocacy. Manatt bolstered legislative efforts to better support foster children raised by relatives, led a 50 state survey of kinship benefits and presented the survey findings to the California Department of Social Services. Their leadership on this issue is poised to improve the lives of thousands of foster children raised by relatives.

May was FOSTER CARE MONTH
graduations, job skills and career paths for transition-age youth

May was FOSTER CARE MONTH
graduations, job skills and career paths for transition-age youth

MYTHS ABOUT TEEN AND SIBLING ADOPTIONS DISPelled
an adoptive father explains the facts

Scott and Veronica adopted their daughters, ages 11 and 12, in February 2014. Scott dispels some of the common myths about adopting pre-teen siblings.

MYTH: TEENS COME WITH BAGGAGE THAT YOU DON’T KNOW ABOUT. FACT: When we adopted the girls, we were given their complete history. Through this, we learned their needs and ways to include them into our family history. We talk about their time in foster care, and because of that, they can be themselves.

MYTH: ADOPTING BABIES IS AN EASIER WAY TO GROW YOUR FAMILY. FACT: Our youngest daughter has cerebral palsy and needs constant care, so we couldn’t parent a young child. For us, adopting older kids meant we could still grow our family.

MYTH: IT’S HARD TO BOND WITH SIBLINGS BECAUSE THEY’VE BEEN THROUGH SO MUCH, AND THEIR BOND IS ONLY WITH EACH OTHER. FACT: Adopting siblings made our relationship building process even smoother. Because they have each other, they never felt isolated or alone. Our relationship added to their relationship.

When siblings enter the foster care system, they are separated from their family, and often, from each other. Around 70% of foster children have siblings in care. It’s rare and something to celebrate when a pre-teen sibling set finds a family to love them both.

Celebrate upcoming adoption days
August 1 & November 21, National Adoption Day

We thank these firms and all of the other phenomenal attorneys and firms who help make our work possible.
BUILDING A BRIDGE TO SUCCESS
from high school to self-sufficiency

Growing up in foster care is hard, and increasingly so, as youth get closer to the foster care finish line (age 21). When foster care was extended from 18 to 21 starting in 2012, it was monumental. The runway for foster youth was significantly expanded giving them more time to pursue an education and vocational training. But, in order to reduce the number of youth aging out into homelessness, incarceration and poverty, as Sean’s story illustrates, it takes more than an extra three years. It takes planning, knowledge about available resources, life skills, and a focus on high school graduation, college and career readiness.

Sean entered foster care at age 10 after an abusive beginning. He was placed in the home of his grandmother, but was never assessed for educational delays, his Medi-Cal was terminated and he went without treatment for anxiety and depression. Sean was already doing poorly in school when his grandmother entered a nursing home. He was moved to a group home, forced to change high schools and fell off track for high school graduation. To make matters worse, on a visit with his father, his dad beat him and a neighbor called the police. His dad told the police Sean initiated the fight. Sean was arrested and entered the juvenile justice system.

The domino effect that is caused by abuse, neglect and constant instability is a common scenario for foster youth. Sean is a youth in transition, but issue after issue disrupts his smooth path towards independence. The Alliance stands with onsite housing where he could focus and get needed therapeutic treatments. Sean did well in his new school, but after an emotional outburst, he was moved to another group home and school.

Exposing youth like Sean to careers, professionals and opportunities helps them set goals and get on a path towards self-sufficiency.

The Alliance recovers academic credits for all of its students when they change schools.

Preparing youth for a successful future requires serious transition planning, from life skills and academics to stable housing and mental health services—youth need these bare necessities and the guidance parent-like advocacy provides. Getting youth to graduate high school and move on to higher education or vocational training is an essential goal. College may not be a viable option for all young people, higher education or vocational training is an essential goal.

High school graduation and college is a huge accomplishment and a feat for many, but it isn’t the end of the road. Finding housing for transition-age youth and for college graduates is still a constant challenge, as is ensuring youth take advantage of the resources available to them, including the benefits of extended foster care, priority registration in community college and credit checks to scan and resolve identity theft issues—a common threat to foster youth.

Sean stayed in his group home until graduation, but then, he faced homelessness until we found an opening at a transitional housing site. We guided Sean through his community college application for mechanic vocational training and sealed his juvenile record so he could apply for a part-time job. We also introduced him to the school’s Guardian Scholars program, which will keep him connected on campus. With a place to lay his head, classes to be excited about and a clean record, Sean is confident and hopeful. He knows he’s not alone when new obstacles come before him.

The Alliance’s programs work to support youth so they don’t become another alarming statistic. With advocacy, the right services, a support system and a high school diploma, foster youth like Sean can move past their past and with the ability to forge a future that is all their own.

The Alliance builds bridges so youth can achieve success in college, the workforce and beyond. Learn more at kids-alliance.org.
$1.3 MILLION RAISED AT 22ND ANNUAL DINNER

The Alliance’s 22nd Annual Dinner on Monday, April 7, honored Anne Sweeney, president, Disney/ABC Television Group, as the National Champion for Children. Jimmy Kimmel paid tribute to Anne before Maria Shriver presented her with the award for her dedication to children and family.

Actor Willie Garson was honored with the Francis M. Wheat Community Service Award for his tireless advocacy as a spokesperson for foster care adoption. Willie adopted his son Nathen, 12, from foster care in 2010. Nathen sweetly presented his dad with the award after sharing his adoption experience with the nearly 1,000 guests at the Beverly Hilton.

The evening program highlighted the Alliance’s work on behalf of relative foster families and teens who struggle to graduate high school while moving around in the foster care system.

The dinner was co-chaired by Board Members Susan Friedman, Leslie and Cliff Gilbert-Lurie, Sue Naegle, Rick Rosen and Toni M. Schulman. Honorary Co-Chairs Mark Gordon, Nancy Josephson, Shonda Rhimes and Maria Shriver set the stage for a very successful event. Thank you to our generous sponsors, supporters and guests for an extraordinary evening to celebrate and support our programs.
A NIGHT FULL OF LAUGHTER

at the 5th Annual the RIGHT to LAUGH

On Thursday, May 29, we held our 5th Annual the RIGHT to LAUGH comedy event presented by SOLOW, at the Avalon Hollywood. The night was a huge success, raising nearly $350,000. More than 500 guests packed the house and enjoyed the night of hilarious laughs from the unstoppable Ray Romano, Brad Garrett, Bill Bellamy, Rob Riggle, David Koechner, Cameron Esposito and host, J.B. Smoove. We sincerely appreciate all of the comedians who generously participated in our event and gave vulnerable children a reason to laugh again.

Attendees truly blew us away with their generous contributions during our silent and FOREVER hoodie auctions. We also want to thank our sponsors: The Gary Magness Foundation, CBS, UTA, City National Bank, Kymberly Marciiano-Stauss & Evan Strauss, Del Shaw, Mooneyes Tanaka Finkelstein & Leccaz, Dianna & Jon Mooneyes, Felker Toczek Suddleston LLP, and our other generous sponsors and donors. We couldn’t have done it without our amazing committee and co-chairs! To learn more and to see additional photos, visit kids-alliance.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS

16th Annual
Tennis for Tots | September 20, 2014

Join us at the Los Angeles Tennis Club for a fun afternoon on the courts. Tennis for Tots has raised more than $1 million for Los Angeles’ children—all while enjoying delicious barbecue and a round robin doubles tournament. The event is generously hosted by Board Member Mitch Kaplan of the Kaplan Stahler Agency and his agency partner, Elliot Stahler. The tournament is held in memory of David and Lynn Angell—a couple committed to uplifting children, who tragically died on September 11, 2001.

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Give Los Angeles’ kids the upper hand at the 11th Annual “All-In” for Kids Celebrity Poker Tournament sponsored by City National Bank at Commerce Casino. Enjoy an afternoon at the tables alongside celebrity participants so that the Alliance can continue to go “all-in” for Los Angeles’ vulnerable young people. We hope to see you there!

For more information on these events and more, visit kids-alliance.org.

11th Annual
“All-In” for Kids Celebrity Poker Tournament | October 19, 2014

Change for Children: A Campaign for Kids Helping Kids

We live in an era where giving back is a family affair. To continue to foster this spirit of giving, the Alliance is launching “Change for Children (C4C),” a fundraising initiative that can take many forms for children and teens. Teens seeking leadership and community giving experience can sign up to champion a C4C coin drive or fundraising campaign at their school. Children can host birthday parties where donations are made in lieu of gifts, and other events like bake sales and car washes to support the Alliance’s work. It’s incredible how much young people can do to make a big difference for abused and neglected children. For more information and to learn how other kids participated, visit kids-alliance.org/c4c or email nora@kids-alliance.org to get involved.
Policy Update

Education Reform is an Opportunity to Close the Achievement Gap for Foster Youth

The Alliance is working with Los Angeles’ education leaders and advocates to guarantee that a new school financial reform makes a considerable dent in improving education outcomes for foster youth. The reform is called the Local Control Funding Formula under which schools serving foster youth, low-income students and English learners are targeted to receive additional funding for support services aimed at helping more vulnerable students graduate high school. To ensure the reform lives up to its promise, the Alliance and the Coalition for Educational Equity for Foster Youth, a multi-agency collaborative, drafted a plan to help school districts effectively invest in vulnerable foster students who face the worst education outcomes over any other at-risk student population. We are actively working with school districts and county agencies to offer recommendations, trainings and the tools necessary to make sure this additional support reaches foster youth.

Step Up Coalition: Solving Inequities for Foster Children Living with Relatives

In the last Alliance Voice, our cover story focused on the disparity in support for foster children who are raised by relatives. The Alliance is leading a coalition called Step Up—a statewide call to action for policy makers to ensure foster children living with relatives have the same financial support and services as children placed with non-relatives. Step Up is pursuing two strategies to put an end to this longstanding injustice.

Budget Request: Step Up asked the Governor and legislature to budget state money to equitably support all foster children raised by relatives just as they do for non-relatives. The CA State Assembly voted to include this in its budget, but the Senate did not. As we go to print, the proposal is pending before a committee responsible for reconciling the differences between the two houses. Step Up is urging the Governor’s backing if the proposal makes it into the final budget passed by the Legislature.

AB 1882 (Cooley): If the budget request is unsuccessful, AB 1882 would secure some additional support for children by requiring social workers to garner CalWORKs funding for children in relative care. The onus is currently on families to apply for this basic support. AB 1882 passed through the Assembly Appropriations Committee on May 23.

With California’s first surplus in years, this an opportune time to ensure relatives have the support they need to give kids a happy, healthy childhood.

The San Francisco Chronicle and Los Angeles Times editorial boards have both called on the state to address this issue. Read the articles and learn more on the new Step Up website (shown above) at stepupforkin.org.

POLICY SOLUTIONS FOR CHILDREN

two new efforts to protect children and improve education

The Alliance is a gift to families navigating the foster/adopt system. Because of their knowledge and care, our children’s lives are forever changed.”

- John Rigsby
Free Smart Phone App Launches for Foster Youth!

Introducing the Know Before You Go app! Now transition-age foster youth in L.A. County have an easily accessible resource guide with them wherever they go. The app is part of the Know Before You Go campaign, which educates youth about succeeding in life after foster care. You too can download the app or help spread the word about this useful new tool for foster youth.

Scan here or text “before” to 96362 to get the free app!

SAVE THE DATE!

September 20, 2014
16th Annual Tennis for Tots
Support kids while having fun on the court

October 19, 2014
11th Annual “All-In” for Kids Celebrity Poker
Commerce Casino hosts Texas Hold ‘Em tournament fundraiser

November 21, 2014
National Adoption Day
Adoptions finalized for thousands of children as part of a national celebration across the country

Visit kids-alliance.org for details.