



The Alliance for Children's Rights

Fall/Winter | 2012



Helping Kids with Heart

“Rick brings a lot of heart to WME on a daily basis, particularly in the work he’s done with our partner school, Foster Elementary. He’s done an incredible job of inspiring his colleagues and friends to also give back,” says Ariel Emanuel, Co-CEO of William Morris Endeavor.

Rick’s commitment to his community is evident in his service as a board member of the Los Angeles Leadership Academy and the Tower Cancer Research Foundation. His personal passion sparks many of WME’s philanthropic ventures, which focus on education and investment in public schools in urban communities.

“As a father, this award carries special meaning for me. I feel lucky to work with the Alliance for Children’s Rights, an organization that’s creating significant change in the lives of children who really need it most,” says Rick.

An entertainment dynamo, Rick built his reputation on being principled, smart and treating people fairly and with respect. He was a founding member of the Endeavor Agency and played an integral role in its merger with the William Morris Agency in 2009. Rick currently represents a wide spectrum of distinguished clients, including Conan O’Brien, Dick Wolf (“Law & Order”), Howard Gordon (“Homeland” and “24”), Stephen Levinson (“Boardwalk Empire”) and notable television production companies Magical Elves (“Top Chef”) and Alloy Entertainment (“Gossip Girl”), among others.

Rick is a devoted father to children, Jonny and Sally.

Dinner info: (213) 368-6010 x115

On Thursday, March 7, 2013, the Alliance will honor **Rick Rosen**, board member and head of television at William Morris Endeavor Entertainment, as its **National Champion for Children**. This prestigious award will be presented at our 21st Annual Dinner held at the Beverly Hilton.

Dinner Chairs Leslie & Cliff Gilbert-Lurie, Sue Naegle, Sean Perry, Susan Friedman and Toni Schulman are joined by Honorary Co-Chairs **Les Moonves** and **Ariel Emanuel** in recognizing Rick’s dedicated efforts to improve the education and well-being of at-risk children and youth.

Melanie Lundquist to Receive the Francis M. Wheat Award

The Francis M. Wheat Community Service Award is given to individuals who are committed to the advancement of underserved children. The Alliance is delighted to present the 2013 award to trailblazing philanthropist, Melanie Lundquist, for her substantial pledge to education and healthcare initiatives in Southern California.

Melanie and her husband Richard donated \$50 million to Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa’s Partnership for L.A. Schools, one of the nation’s largest public school turnaround projects, which has transformed 22 of the city’s lowest performing schools. Melanie also routinely funds scholarships for former foster youth who are pursuing higher education and supports programs for the betterment of teachers.



Philanthropist, political activist and education reformer, Melanie Lundquist.

Message from CEO Janis Spire & Board Chair Bart Williams

THE ALLIANCE FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Providing free legal services for impoverished, abused and neglected children so that they have safe, stable homes, healthcare and the education they need to thrive.

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The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recently reported that 415,000 U.S. children are in foster care, with 53,343 residing in California. This puts the responsibility on all Californians to provide for thousands of children with tragic pasts, many of whom enter the system with special education needs and mental or physical disabilities. At the same time, our state budget has never been more stretched.

In the face of growing needs and limited resources, the Alliance has found innovative ways to expand our programs at two vital points during a child's time in foster care—as they enter the system and as they prepare to leave it.

Through a new partnership with the **L.A. County + USC Medical Center**, we are bringing legal advocacy into the hospital by working with doctors who treat children who are victims of abuse and neglect (see page 3). Such abuse often contributes to developmental delays and deep emotional imbalances. While the doctors heal medical problems, we overcome barriers to accessing Early Head Start, pediatric therapy programs and other services children need.

Thanks to a generous grant from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, we are also partnering with the Children's Law Center to help older foster youth become eligible for foster care benefits beyond their 18th birthday and prepare for independence (see page 5). This collaboration will yield a one-of-a-kind smart phone application, providing instant information on housing, employment, education and other resources young adults need to become self-sufficient.

These groundbreaking partnerships have allowed us to reach more children and youth, empowered us to deepen the scope of our work and have ultimately led to better results for our clients.

This is where YOU come in! Please join us and continue to support the work that we do on behalf of our children. They need us and we need you!

The Alliance welcomes five new board members



PETER BENEDEK is CEO and co-founder of the United Talent Agency. He has held post as one of Hollywood's most influential agents for nearly 30 years.

Peter is a longtime Alliance supporter and co-chair of the annual the RIGHT to LAUGH comedy event.



KIRK PASICH is a partner at law firm Dickstein Shapiro, LLP and a generous supporter who has marshaled millions of dollars in *pro bono* services since the

Alliance's inception. Kirk was named one of the Top 10 Litigators in L.A. by the *Los Angeles Business Journal*.

On the Front Lines to Reach Kids Early

When a child is removed from an unsafe home by the Department of Children and Family Services, her first stop is usually one of seven medical HUBs in L.A. County. These pediatric facilities operate around the clock to treat physical and mental trauma.

The Alliance has worked with the L.A. County + USC Medical Center for years and the relationship was formalized in February 2012 with the establishment of our Medical Legal Partnership (MLP). Alliance Attorney Taylor Dudley works on site with the doctors to create a holistic wellness plan for the patients by advocating for the education, mental health and disability support services they need.

“This project will help us address the epidemic of children languishing in foster care without the appropriate services to overcome developmental delays, become school ready and heal both emotionally and physically. Being on site and working closely with the doctors allows the Alliance to reach children and provide them with the help they need as soon as they enter the system,” says Alliance Legal Director Laura Streimer.



Alliance Attorney Taylor Dudley (right) reviews a case with Dr. Janet Arnold at the L.A. County + USC Medical Center.

Thanks to seed funding from the Unihealth Foundation, the Medical Legal Partnership has been a lifeline to 150 children and families already, and will be there for many more in the future!

Introducing Michael House

Michael House recently joined the Alliance, assuming a new position as our Chief Operating Officer and Vice President of Strategy. Michael's role is to strengthen day-to-day reporting and operations and to support our expanding programs and growing technology needs.



Before joining the Alliance, Michael was the CEO of the Painted Turtle—one of Paul Newman's charities. He previously served as Associate Vice Chancellor at UC Irvine and as Assistant Vice President of the University of Florida Foundation for 18 years. Michael earned his PhD from the University of Florida.



KEVIN REILLY

is Chairman of Entertainment for FOX Broadcasting Company. Kevin is one of TV's most influential leaders, a generous supporter

of the Alliance and devoted to making his community a better place for future generations.



BRUCE ROSENBLUM

is President of Warner Bros. Television Group and a 23-year veteran at Warner Bros. Widely regarded as one of TV's most innovative executives, Bruce is the Chair-

man & CEO of the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences. His continued support has helped expand Alliance programs.



SUSAN SALTZ

is a philanthropist dedicated to protecting children at risk around the world. Through her lead gift, the Alliance's *Early Intervention Advocacy*

Center was launched in 2010, providing abused infants and toddlers access to developmental services.

KIRKLAND & ELLIS LLP

Attorney Uses Her Personal Experience to Help Others

Kirkland & Ellis Associate **Allison Worthy Buchner, Esq.** brings a unique perspective to her work as an Alliance *pro bono* attorney. Allison's daughter, Samantha, was born prematurely, and her pediatrician became concerned when Samantha was delayed in her ability to sit independently and crawl. Allison and her husband tried to secure services from the Regional Center, and there, they began their role as advocate parents.

"It's not like anyone ever sat us down and said, 'OK, here's what we do, these are the services and this is what will help you,'" said Allison. When it became increasingly difficult to get her daughter qualified for therapy sessions, Allison's natural reaction as a lawyer was to appeal and advocate. "If I hadn't been familiar with the appeals process, I don't know what we would have done," said Allison. "This was a very difficult system to navigate—it wasn't easy and I consider myself a tough litigator."



Allison with daughter Samantha, who was diagnosed with cerebral palsy and has thrived in her therapies.



Allison decided she wanted to help less equipped families overcome the hurdles she faced advocating for Samantha. Knowing her firm's commitment to *pro bono* work, Allison turned to Kirkland partner and head of their *pro bono* program, Mark Cramer, who encouraged her to contact the Alliance's Education Program and our *Saltz Family Early Intervention Advocacy Center*. Today, Allison is an active volunteer helping abused and neglected children get the early services they need to gain independence and to enable them to be their best selves.

At Left: Mark Cramer and Allison with Kirkland & Ellis' *pro bono* trophy. In 2011, the firm's Los Angeles office completed the highest percentage of the firm's 88,000 *pro bono* hours!

Relative Caregivers Get an Equal Voice for Their Children

When an abused child is removed from his parents, ideally he will move into the home of a loving and familiar relative. Relative caregivers, however, have routinely been denied the opportunity to challenge the County's decision when it determines that they are not an appropriate placement.

In 2009, Renee and Kevin Travis applied to become foster parents for their grandchildren who needed a home. Upon further review, the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) denied their application due to a petty crime committed by Mr. Travis 20 years prior.

In a panic, the Traveses requested a

waiver commonly available by law under these particular circumstances. They even provided DCFS with proof of Mr. Travis' long standing employment, church involvement and references. DCFS still refused approval. If they had been non-relative foster parents, they could have challenged the County's actions at a hearing before a State judge. But the State did not provide relative caregivers with access to the same appeals process.

The Traveses made the ultimate sacrifice—Mr. Travis moved out of their home. DCFS continued to deny their home, stating it would only do so if the Traveses divorced. In the end, the Travis grandchildren were removed and placed with

strangers. They were forever separated from their grandparents and from one another. The Alliance, along with *pro bono* attorneys at **O'Melveny & Myers** and **USC Law** Professor Clare Pastore and USC students, filed suit against the C.A. Department of Social Services on behalf of the Traveses and other similarly situated families. The suit challenged the State's failure to provide relative caregivers the same process it afforded non-relatives when appealing home inspection denials.

After several years of litigation, the court ordered that the State establish such a forum. This victory will give hundreds of caregivers a chance to be there when their families need them most.



Day of Life Skills for Foster Youth

Foster youth in California now have the option of staying in care to age 21, granting them three additional years to pursue education and employment goals. The Alliance co-sponsored landmark legislation *Fostering Connections* (AB 12), which made this monumental change to California's child welfare system. We have also taken a lead in training youth and caregivers across the state on the new law.

On Saturday, September 15, the Alliance along with the Children's Law Center hosted our 2nd Annual Survival Saturday. Over 50 youth, caregivers and group home staff came together to better understand the youths' new rights.

Thank you to the **Friends of the Alliance (FOA)** and our volunteers (right) who helped make this rewarding event possible! Thanks to the Children's Institute for donating their facility.

FOA info: Marlene at m.mcguirt@kids-alliance.org



WORKSHOPS:

- ✓ Car maintenance
- ✓ Interview skills
- ✓ Higher education
- ✓ Careers in the tech industry



Welcome Deborah Cromer, NextSTEP Program Director



Deborah Cromer joined the Alliance this year, bringing a wealth of service and leadership experience to the NextSTEP team. Deborah is a graduate of Whittier Law School and was most recently an attorney at the Children's Law Center where she represented foster youth

in L.A. County. There she also served as the Education Coordinator, advocating for the education rights of foster youth through consultation, training and policy reform.

Deborah brings 20+ years experience in communications for emerging growth companies. She led strategic initiatives at a number of Fortune 50 high-tech companies, served in managerial roles at international public relations agencies and owned her own marketing firm, which she sold to BBDO.

The Alliance Policy Team Trains California on Foster Care Beyond 18!

Since January, Alliance policy experts have trained hundreds of caregivers and service providers throughout the state on *Fostering Connections* (AB 12), including changes



made to housing licensing and youth participation requirements. "This law significantly alters foster care in California and it is imperative that those providing direct services and housing for older youth understand the intricacies of the new law and all it has to offer," says Policy Director Angie Schwartz (above right).

If you are interested in attending a training, contact Anjali Arora-Dow (above left) at a.aroradow@kids-alliance.org.

the RIGHT to LAUGH Hits a Funny Bone in Hollywood



Supporters Mandy and Brian Teefey with daughter, actress and singer, Selena Gomez.



The cast of the RIGHT to LAUGH sketch comedy, including Patricia Heaton, Richard Kind, Amy Yasbeck, George Wendt, Ed Begley, Jr. and David Steinberg, to name a few!



Martin Short strikes a pose with show director Ron West.

The Avalon was packed with 500 guests and an acclaimed group of comedic actors at the 3rd Annual RIGHT to LAUGH event on Tuesday, June 12 benefitting the Alliance. The comedy showcase honoring The Second City raised nearly \$200,000 to support our programs. Guests enjoyed the talent of some of the entertainment industry's most celebrated comedians (pictured above) and special remarks from Steve & Nancy Carell, Jeff Garlin and Stephen Colbert. The event would not have been possible without our generous sponsors **CBS, City National Bank, DreamWorks, Guess Foundation, Symantec** and **UTA**, among others. Thank you to our event chairs Peter Benedek, Gene Stein, Wendi Trilling and Dana Gould, along with Cindy Caponera and Ron West for producing and directing the show. For 2013 event details, visit kids-alliance.org.



"Adopt-A-Family" Event

Alliance corporate partner Ernst & Young is hosting the 4th Annual "Adopt-A-Family" holiday giving event on **Saturday, December 8**. Thirty families will be given much-needed essentials and fun gifts for the kids to brighten their holiday.

Info: (213) 368-6010 x115

Ralphs Community Contribution Program

If you have registered for Ralphs Community Contribution Program in the past, please remember to renew your enrollment. If you've yet to join the program, visit **Ralphs.com** to sign up. The program allows you to give to the Alliance simply by grocery shopping!

Melanie Lundquist to Receive the Francis M. Wheat Award *(continued from cover)*

When public dollars are unavailable for vital community needs like education, Melanie fills in the gap. It's actions like this that make her a philanthropic change-maker. She also advocates for other philanthropists to meet the needs of today through their giving programs.

Thank you, Melanie, for your innovative approach to philanthropy and for committing your resources and heart to improving education outcomes for kids!

Dinner info: (213) 368-6010 x115



A Big Win for Tots

It was another banner year for Tennis for Tots held on Saturday, September 22 at the Los Angeles Tennis Club! Thanks to generous hosts and underwriters, Board Member Mitch Kaplan and Elliot Stahler of the Kaplan Stahler Agency, the event raised over \$85,000. Proceeds will go directly to free legal services for foster youth.

Mitch Kaplan has hosted Tennis for Tots since 1998. The event has been held in memory of David and Lynn Angell since their tragic deaths on September 11, 2001.

Thank you to the **Kaplan Stahler Agency**, **The Angell Foundation**, **City National Bank**, **Rosemary & Peter Casey**, **David Lee & Mark Nichols**, **O'Melveny & Myers** and all of the other generous sponsors, players and donors who contributed to a great day on the courts!



Yuyu Myinttun of Momentous Insurance playing Center Court.



Hosts Elliot Stahler, Marilyn Jones and Mitch Kaplan.



Valerie Carbrera (center) serves up lemonade with (from l-r) Ali and Ryan Goldberg, Bella Carino and Pamela Burkhardt.



Players Go "All-In" for Kids



Above: Jason Alexander is "Going to Disneyland."
Right: Mick Betancourt, Billy Gardell and Friends of the Alliance Council members Patty Gardell and Pamela Soper.



Ninety poker players came out to Commerce Casino on Sunday, October 21 to throw in their chips and raise \$70,000 for the Alliance. It was a star-studded crowd with Brad Garrett, Jason Alexander, Willie

Garson, Billy Gardell, Mimi Rogers, J.K. Simmons, Tony

Denison, Tim Griffin, Nicole Sullivan, Gina Hecht and Dave Higgins. Thanks goes out to our generous players, donors and event host Commerce Casino. Thanks also to sponsors **City National Bank**, **Ana Marie Stern**, **Vin Di Bona Prod.**, **Greenberg Glusker** and **Ken Hertz**, and co-chairs Angie Harmon, Kathy Meherin and John Schulman. Congratulations to tournament winner Randy Gordon.



Save the date!



The Friends of the Alliance (FOA) will be hosting **Dinner with Friends & OSCAR** parties at dozens of private homes all over Los Angeles on **Sunday, February 24, 2013!** FOA is an auxiliary group of individuals from diverse backgrounds and professions who are committed to raising awareness and funds to support our work. **If you are interested in hosting a Dinner with Friends & OSCAR party**, please contact Marlene McGuirt at m.mcguirt@kids-alliance.org or (213) 368-6010, ext. 108.



The Alliance for Children's Rights

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A Home for the Holidays & FOREVER



Los Angeles' **National Adoption Day (NAD)** on **Friday, November 16** celebrates the formation of 150 families. NAD is held in hundreds of cities in all 50 states. More than 100,000 foster children in the U.S. are waiting to be adopted. For details, visit kids-alliance.org or nationaladoptionday.org.

Holiday Giving

Send your loved ones and colleagues a meaningful holiday gift while supporting the Alliance by purchasing a holiday gift card. Email j.warren-lane@kids-alliance.org.



Alliance Partner Event:

ZERO TO THREE'S
27th National Training Institute
November 28 – December 1
JW Marriott, L.A. Live



Upcoming Events:

Host your own
**DINNER WITH FRIENDS
& OSCAR PARTY**

Sunday, February 24



21ST ANNUAL DINNER
Honoring Rick Rosen

Thursday, March 7



Support the Alliance at kids-alliance.org.