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22ND ANNUAL DINNER TO HONOR ANNE SWEENEY

Disney/ABC executive committed to helping children with special needs

On **Monday, April 7, 2014**, the Alliance will honor Anne Sweeney, co-chair, Disney Media Networks, and president, Disney/ABC Television Group, as its **National Champion for Children**. This prestigious award will be presented at our 22nd Annual Dinner held at the Beverly Hilton.

Dinner Chairs Leslie & Cliff Gilbert-Lurie, Sue Naegle, Rick Rosen, Susan Friedman and Toni Schulman are joined by Honorary Co-Chairs **Mark Gordon, Nancy Josephson, Shonda Rhimes** and **Maria Shriver** in recognizing Anne as a crusader for children and youth who face adversity.

“Anne’s highly acclaimed career is deeply rooted in her devotion to children and family. These values embody who she is professionally and personally and make her the ideal recipient of this award,” said Rick Rosen.

Hailing from a long line of educators, Anne is deeply committed to storytelling that sparks the imaginations and inspires the minds of young people. Anne is also passionate about helping children with special needs. She began advocating for children with disabilities after her son was diagnosed with autism. She later served as a board member for the Special Olympics.

Anne joined The Walt Disney Company in 1996 and now oversees a portfolio that includes ABC, ABC Studios, ABC Family, ABC News, Radio Disney and Disney Channels

“I am honored to be recognized as the National Champion for Children. The Alliance’s commitment to educating and empowering underserved children, including those with special needs, aligns with the core values of our Disney Channels and I’m thrilled to accept this on behalf of the entire team.” -Anne Sweeney

Worldwide. Anne has helped Disney|ABC Television Group lead the industry into the digital age, with innovative products that extend TV content to new platforms. Anne’s previous positions include CEO of FX Networks and SVP of Program Enterprises for Nickelodeon.

As a powerhouse executive with 30 years of experience leading family-centric networks, Anne has been repeatedly named the “Most Powerful Woman in Entertainment” by the *Hollywood Reporter*, one of the “50 Most Powerful Women in Business” by *Fortune* and one of “The World’s 100 Most Powerful Women” by *Forbes*, in addition to receiving numerous other awards.

A MESSAGE FROM

CEO

JANIS SPIRE & BART WILLIAMS

BOARD CHAIR



The tragic death of eight-year-old Gabriel Fernandez last summer once again catapulted Los Angeles County’s Department of Children and Family Services into the spotlight. The media, County officials and public were looking for answers as to why, with so many warning signs, did the County leave this child in the hands of his abusive mother. Now the country’s largest child welfare system is under the microscope of a recently-formed Blue Ribbon Commission tasked with recommending changes to stem persistent cases of child abuse and deaths. Our Board Member Leslie Gilbert-Lurie is vice chair of the commission, along with nine other esteemed community leaders who will present their recommendations this April.

While the commission convenes, California’s child welfare leaders work on a related and important effort. The Continuum of Care Reform initiative shares our goal of ensuring all foster children live with a committed and loving family. This means institutional settings, like group homes, are used only as a short term intervention, and services are tailored to meet the needs of the individual child and family.

Essential to these goals is ensuring that children being cared for by relatives have adequate support to meet their needs (see page 6). The *Los Angeles Times* published our opinion editorial ‘Families who foster deserve parity’ on September 3, which focused on just this issue. If you missed it, check it out at kids-alliance.org/relatives.

Sometimes it feels like every step forward in child welfare comes with a step back. For instance, the extension of foster care to age 21 was a huge win for foster youth, giving them time to pursue college and other goals. However, foster youths’ access to California’s community colleges is now threatened. Our kids need more support, stronger partners and greater compassion—not less. If we’re going to prevent child deaths, help children thrive in family settings and increase the number of foster youth who attain high school diplomas and college degrees, we have to be willing to help them get there.

Thank you for your continued and generous support, allowing us to advocate for the futures of thousands of children.

RICK ROSEN JOINS ALLIANCE BOARD

Rick Rosen is a board member and head of television at William Morris Endeavor. He currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Tower Cancer Research Foundation and Board of Governors for the Paley Center for Media. Rick is a true friend and supporter of the Alliance, and was honored with our National Champion for Children award at our 21st Annual Dinner. Welcome Rick!



WILLIE GARSON RECOGNIZED FOR RAISING THE PROFILE OF FOSTER CARE ADOPTION

The Alliance will honor actor Willie Garson with the 2014 **Francis M. Wheat Community Service Award** at our 22nd Annual Dinner. Willie has been in more than 200 films and television series, including his current role as Mozzie on USA’s *White Collar*. While Willie has starred on screen as characters such as Mozzie, Henry on *NYPD Blue* and Stanford Blatch on *Sex and the City*, he truly shines off screen as a dedicated and vocal advocate for foster children. In 2010, the Alliance assisted Willie with adopting 9 year-old Nathen from Los Angeles County foster care. Willie is a devoted father and a passionate national spokesperson who creates a voice for thousands of foster children waiting to be adopted. Willie personifies what the Francis M. Wheat Award stands for—a deep commitment to helping underserved children.

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FOLEY & LARDNER GIVE YOUTH A FAIR START

and helps them avoid homelessness

Thank you to Leeann, Tami, Jeff and all the committed pro bono attorneys from Foley & Lardner.

Foley & Lardner is committed to giving to the community and encourages attorneys to pursue personally meaningful pro bono work. Foley attorneys have found that work in several of our programs, including adoption, guardianship, education and our NextStep Program for youth transitioning out of foster care.

For youth exiting foster care with severe disabilities, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) can mean the difference between homelessness and stability.

For 18-year-old Juan G., attorney Leeann Habte's victory in court resulted in his being able to move out of a homeless shelter and into an apartment where he could get consistent medical care and food to eat. *"I take on disability cases because it's rewarding to know this young person, who otherwise would've been homeless, now has access to basic things like food, shelter and medical care, which every person in this country deserves,"* said Leeann.

SSI cases take hours of commitment. Attorneys have to collect and decipher medical, education and mental health records for an administrative hearing, but the investment of time is life changing for foster youth.

"The youth I've worked with have experienced significant abuse, and they don't have anyone to count on. It was a gift to give them that support and help them get the benefits they deserve."

-Leeann Habte



Like Leeann (right), Foley Attorneys Tami Smason (left) and Jeff Bates (middle) have successfully handled SSI cases for youth who desperately needed an advocate

EMPLOYEE GIVING GOOD FOR BUSINESS

An interview with Rick Clemens, CEO of **Inclusive Education & Community Partnership**

How did your employee giving program start?

As our organization grew, I felt like we had a greater responsibility to the community. Most people want to give, but don't know how. So we researched nonprofits that matched our values and then let the employees choose who to support. This program has become a part of our company culture and has formed common goals.

Most of your employees have limited means, yet they contribute. Why?

These are young folks that aren't making a lot of money, yet through the worst of the recession they continued to give because they knew that others had a greater need than they did.

Is employee giving worth the time it takes to manage?

There is no question more employers should do this. Many organizations give to charity, but they do not involve the employees. This program simplifies charitable giving.

Why the Alliance?

My employees appreciate and connect with what the Alliance is doing. Several staff were in foster care themselves. It's uplifting to know they're making a difference beyond their everyday work.

◀ Rick with employee Chandra Kennedy, top contributor through Inclusive Education's employee giving program, which has supported the Alliance since 2009.

EMPOWERING FUTURES

getting resources in the hands of transition-age youth

Turning 18 is a huge milestone for any teenager. But for youth in foster care, turning 18 means making major adult life decisions—often without parental guidance. The Alliance now has several initiatives to help guide these youth.

Know Before You Go

The Alliance and the Children's Law Center (CLC) of California launched "Know Before You Go," aimed at giving youth a "one-stop-shop" packet of information about staying in foster care until 21, including independent living options, higher education, employment and reproductive health.

Peer Advocates & Mobile Unit

Alliance Peer Advocates are former foster youth with paid internships, who support the NextStep team and provide peer-to-peer advocacy. Peer Advocates use their own experiences to help peers make smart decisions about their futures. Peer Advocates and NextStep staff use tablets in court and around the community to assist youth with quick but important tasks like signing up for housing and identifying scholarships.

Smart Phone App

To give youth resources at their fingertips, we're launching the "Know Before You Go" smart phone app. The app features a map-based interface that navigates youth to resources like shelters, food banks and health clinics. The app is also a hub of information about housing providers, employment opportunities and county resources. The Alliance will also send important push notifications, such as financial aid deadlines and job openings. The app will soon be available for download on iPhone, Android and Blackberry.

Survival Saturday

The Survival Saturday series continues to motivate and empower hundreds of transition-age foster youth. Our latest installment, "Moving Past Your Past," enabled youth to hear from adults who had moved through difficult pasts and are now successful in life.

Alliance and CLC Peer Advocates hold up "Know Before You Go" packets with youth at Survival Saturday on October 12, 2013

These projects are made possible through the support of The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation along with California Community Foundation, Carl and Roberta Deutsch Foundation, George Hoag Family Foundation, Max Factor Family Foundation, W.M. Keck Foundation, Newman's Own Foundation, Ralph M. Parsons Foundation, Pfaffinger Foundation, Anthony & Jeanne Pritzker Family Foundation, The Rose Hills Foundation, S. Mark Taper Foundation and J.B. & Emily Van Nuys Charities.



RELATIVES STEP UP FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

yet California does not equitably support foster children living with a relative

I am a 57-year-old mother of four grown children and 13 grandchildren. My granddaughter Abbie and her half-sister Layla entered foster care two years ago when their mother began using drugs. Child protective services asked if the girls could live with me. They were hungry, frightened and the only belongings they had were in a paper bag. I was scared and the social worker provided very little information about being a parent in the foster care system. Because Layla is not my biological grandchild, she immediately received a clothing allowance and state foster care benefits. The support for Abbie is different and hardly covers her basic needs. I have fought hard to keep these girls together. I had to parent both of them the same, even though the difference in support for Abbie and Layla is so great. They are equally amazing and deserve equal support. If I had adequate support, I would be able to provide more healthy activities like sports or dance. But these things are too expensive, so we make do.

-Sharon M.

Sharon is not alone. More than a third of California's 50,000 foster children live with a relative and 45% are in Los Angeles County. The majority of these children do not receive the support provided to other foster children simply because they are placed with kin. Relatives are the backbone of the child welfare system.

36% of California's foster children are placed with relatives.

Foster children placed with relatives are like any other—they have been removed from their homes due to abuse



or neglect, and taken into state care with the promise that they will be shielded from further neglect. Studies show that placing children with relatives can mitigate trauma, reduce behaviors that can lead to placement in a group home and increase the likelihood of achieving success later in life. Relatives also provide consistency, stability and preserve family and community connections.

Despite the importance of family members to improving their well-being, many children placed in the homes of relatives do not receive the financial support to meet their basic needs. This is true despite the fact that California requires relatives to meet the exact same licensing requirements as all foster parents.

Children placed with relatives receive the short end of the stick. Federal financial support for children placed in foster care is based on antiquated rules that have not been updated since 1996, and the bulk of children in foster care in California don't qualify for this federal support. The state steps in to support those foster children who are ineligible, but only if they live with an unrelated foster parent. They refuse to pay the same benefits for children placed with relatives.

California is the only state that refuse to ever provide state foster care benefits to children placed with relatives.

Here's what California pays to support a non-federally eligible foster child:



\$351/month for a child in a relative home



\$820/month in a non-relative home*



\$8,300+/month for a foster child to live in a group home

*the rate can be as much as \$3,000/month if the child has special needs

The state has determined that the minimum amount of support necessary to care for a foster child is \$820/month, yet they turn around and provide only \$351/month if that same child lives with a relative. It defies reason!

Our child welfare system is on shaky ground. Without grandparents and other relatives willing to step up and support children in foster care, our entire system would likely collapse.

To ensure that all of California's foster children have what they need no matter who their foster parent might be, the Alliance and our partners have launched a campaign called **Step Up: Supporting Relatives, Protecting Children.** Step Up seeks to educate the public and law makers about the grave inequity that exists in our child welfare system in order to bring about change that can keep more foster children in safe, loving families. Learn more and join the Step Up coalition by visiting our dedicated website at stepupforkin.org.

Los Angeles Times

Tuesday, September 3, 2013

OP-ED

Families who foster deserve parity

Relatives who care for a child deserve the same benefits as non-related foster parents



I am a single mother caring for my six-year-old daughter. My niece, Nicka, 2, was placed in foster care as an infant and spent time in multiple homes. I couldn't bear the craziness of her early life, so I decided to give her a stable home. Before Nicka came to live with me, I worked nights at Denny's and spent my days in community college. Once Nicka came, I had to give up school because Nicka needs lots of attention and counseling every day. When she lived with a foster parent, Nicka received funding for the therapy, but I pay out of pocket. When she lived with a foster parent, she received more than \$1,000 a month for her care. I receive \$351 a month, which barely covers the cost of gas to get Nicka to her appointments. I'd like to adopt Nicka, but the system won't let me until I get an apartment with a second bedroom, which I can't afford right now. I'm really worried about our future. I would love to finish my education and get a good job so that I can provide for my daughter and Nicka, but it seems like an out of reach dream.

-Ana T.

"The system needs to support relatives who are willing to step up to the plate." Read the Alliance's complete Los Angeles Times op-ed from September 3, 2013 at kids-alliance.org/relatives or latimes.com.

COMEDY LEGENDS BROUGHT DOWN THE HOUSE

at the 4th Annual the RIGHT to LAUGH



Bottom left: Kate Adler, Michelle Richman, co-chair Kymberly Marciano-Strauss, Amy Yasbeck, CEO Janis Spire, co-chair Wendi Trilling, Marlene McGuirt, Katie Bond and Sarah and Bill Odenkirk
Top Left: Zac Simm, David Stone, Michael Plonsker, Alex Schwartz, Rachele Carson, Maurice La Marche, Steve Trilling, Patty and Billy Gardell, Ed Begley, Jr., Geert De Truck and co-chair Gene Stein



Wanda Sykes



David Stapf of CBS with wife Tami



Nick Kroll, Billy Gardell, George Lopez and Bob Odenkirk



Bill, Bob and Sarah Odenkirk

The 4th Annual the RIGHT to LAUGH comedy event was a huge success, raising more than \$250,000 for the Alliance's programs. On Thursday, May 30, 2013, more than 500 guests crowded the Avalon Hollywood for an amazing show hosted by Nicole Sullivan with performances by A-list comics George Lopez, Billy Gardell, Bob Saget, Bob Odenkirk, Wanda Sykes, Craig Ferguson and Nick Kroll.

Attendees blew us away with their overwhelming generosity during our FOREVER Project auction. Thank you to CBS, UTA, Guess?, Symantec, City National Bank, Patty & Billy Gardell, Maurice LaMarche and our other generous sponsors, event co-chairs & committee (see above), donors and volunteers. To learn more about the upcoming RIGHT to LAUGH event and to view more photos, visit kids-alliance.org.



15th Annual Tennis for Tots

The 15th Annual Tennis for Tots event was held on Saturday, September 21, 2013. It was a great afternoon of tennis, delicious barbeque and fun at the Los Angeles Tennis Club. The event raised more than \$90,000 in memory of David and Lynn Angell and was generously hosted by Alliance Board Member Mitch Kaplan and Elliot Stahler of the Kaplan Stahler Agency. Many thanks to City National Bank, the Angell Foundation, Rosemary & Peter Casey, Los Angeles Tennis Club, O'Melveny & Meyers LLP, PublicIdentity and our many other past sponsors, players and donors for their contributions to making the event a success.



Peter Sahin serves for the point



Eric Sloane, Jim Preminger, Amanda Marzolf, Peter Sahin and Barry Weiss on Center Court



Marilyn Jones, Marlene McGuirt, Mitch Kaplan and Lila Blanc



10th Annual "All-in" for Kids Celebrity Poker Tournament

On Sunday, October 27, 2013, Commerce Casino hosted the 10th Annual "All-In" for Kids Celebrity Poker Tournament, spearheaded by founder and co-chair Kathy Meherin. Our generous players threw in their chips and raised \$100,000. The star-studded group of Texas hold 'em players included actors Willie Garson, J.K. Simmons, Tony Denison, G.W. Bailey, Tim Griffin, Kenny Johnson, Gina Hecht, producers Suzanne Todd, Monica Levinson, Stuart Cornfeld and Carol Fenelon, along with co-chair John Schulman, Shelli Azoff and Martha

Thank you to title sponsor City National Bank, along with the Diane and Dorothy Brooks Foundation, Ana Marie Stern, Bob Lichtenstein, Shelli Azoff/Azoff Music, Vin Di Bona, Ken Ziffren, Jeanie Buss & Linda Rambis of the L.A. Lakers and to our other sponsors, players and donors!



◀ J.K. Simmons went "All-In" for Kids



Celebrity players hand it off to Kathy Meherin (center) and co-chair John Schulman (second from right) for ten years of commitment to the Alliance

JOIN FRIENDS OF THE ALLIANCE

be a voice for children

Friends of the Alliance (FOA) is committed to raising awareness about the Alliance and the resources necessary to continue our work on behalf of Los Angeles' most needy children. Friends commit to giving or raising \$1,000 or more annually. They come from diverse backgrounds and professions, but they share a commitment to children.

What does it mean to be a Friend?

Being a Friend means being an advocate and champion for impoverished children and foster youth. FOAs host fun events that raise money for our kids. They are also actively involved in programming for youth, including the Survival Saturday skill-building series. Some FOAs are mentors, preparing youth to transition out of foster care. Others volunteer and participate in events at their convenience. Our group is growing, but we are always looking for new Friends!

▼ "Short Term 12" advance film screening and Q&A reception hosted by the FOA. Pictured (L-R): Producer Asher Goldstein with stars Kaitlyn Dever, Brie Larson and Keith Stanfield



WHAT EVENTS DO FOAS PARTICIPATE IN?

Dinner with Friends & OSCAR Sunday, March 2, 2014



Host or attend a party in your or a friend's home during the Academy Awards to raise money for the Alliance. Have a pizza party, a red carpet event or something in between—anything goes!

Survival Saturday "Moving Past Your Past"



FOAs volunteered at the recent "Moving Past Your Past" Survival Saturday. They conducted mock interviews, taught youth how to shop and cook on a budget and helped facilitate workshops. Survival Saturdays are held several times a year, so get involved with FOA and stay tuned for the next event planned for March 8.



FOA Amanda Wilson conducting a mock interview with a youth at Survival Saturday with volunteer Paul Blavin in the background talking with another participant

Join Friends of the Alliance today by contacting Director of Development Marlene McGuirt at m.mcguirt@kids-alliance.org or **213.368.6010**. You can also check the box on the inserted donation envelope to receive additional information.

THREE BILLS SIGNED BY GOVERNOR

closing 2013 with legislative wins that will benefit our kids

It was an active year for the Alliance's Policy Division, with three bills we supported signed into law. We successfully worked with lawmakers and partner organizations to pass bills that will benefit:

- foster youth in high school, who are behind on credits for graduation (AB 216, Stone);
- foster youth over the age of 18, whose adoptive parents or legal guardians die (AB 787, Stone); and
- pregnant and parenting foster youth (SB 528, Yee).

On average, a foster youth will change school six times while in care. Every school change can cause a six month loss in learning. Foster youth frequently lose credits when they transfer, exacerbating their academic standing. AB 216 will exempt foster youth from meeting all of the school district's graduation requirements, if they have experienced academic disruption between 10th and 12th grade. This will allow more youth to graduate from high school and do so on time.

AB 787 widens the safety net for transition-age foster youth by giving a special group of youth access to the benefits of extended foster care (AB 12). Many former foster youth who exited foster care through adoption or guardianship are eligible to receive benefits until age 21. However, prior to the passage of AB 787, if the adoptive parent or guardian died before the youth turned 21, the teen would lose their only source of support. AB 787 allows these youth to re-enter foster care and receive support until 21. This will protect a vulnerable population from homelessness and instability.



The Alliance is proud to be a strong voice in Sacramento for the stability and support of California's children. We look forward to continuing this work in the coming year!

Teen girls in foster care are 2.5 times more likely to become pregnant by age 19. We want to change this, and SB 528 is a step in the right direction. The bill requires counties to collect data regarding teens in foster care who are parenting. This information will help determine what supports work and what supports are needed to better serve this population. SB 528 also clarifies that social workers can provide information on reproductive health to foster youth.

Special Thanks to Ahdoot & Wolfson, PC Attorneys!

We are grateful to Robert Ahdoot and Tina Wolfson of Ahdoot & Wolfson for their belief in our advocacy efforts for children and for facilitating a significant *cy pres* settlement award that will enable us to protect and serve many more impoverished, abused and neglected children in the future.





ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



HOME & FAMILY



Actress and Board member Angie Harmon visited Hallmark Channel's Home & Family to talk about the Alliance and cook with former foster youth Jessica Chandler. Watch at kids-alliance.org.

SAVE THE DATE



MARCH 2, 2014
Dinner with Friends & OSCAR
Host a party and raise money for our kids



APRIL 7, 2014
22nd Annual Dinner
Honoring Anne Sweeney, Disney/ABC TV
and Willie Garson, actor



JUNE TBD, 2014
5th Annual the RIGHT to LAUGH
A night of laughs with comedy greats



★★★★
CHARITY NAVIGATOR
Four Star Charity