



Promises2Kids exists to create a brighter future for children who are in foster care as a result of abuse or neglect. Through our unique programs and services, we respond to the diverse needs of foster children of all ages, promoting lifelong skills they will carry into adulthood. One of the great joys we experience is witnessing our youth embrace their own leadership qualities as they grow up. This is particularly fulfilling since many of these youth come to our doors after experiencing such trauma, and without trusted adults to guide them.

Promises2Kids has several leadership programs; including the Men's and Women's Leadership Networks! These unique programs are small group coaching opportunities for our college-age foster youth to share and learn from local business leaders through mentorship.

**These Networks and our other leadership programs are critical to developing leaders and also why we launched our Coach-A-Youth Campaign to raise awareness and funds for all of our leadership programs. You can learn more at: [www.promises2kids.org](http://www.promises2kids.org)**

Foster children have often missed out on the kind of leadership other kids experience from trusted adults and peers. Unfortunately, without support, foster children face

homelessness, depression, addiction and even incarceration. Nationally, over 1/3 of foster youth end up homeless within 18 months of leaving care as an adult, 80% have mental health challenges, most commonly depression or post-traumatic stress disorder, and adult prisoners report over 90% having an abusive childhood and/or in foster care.

**Research has proven that the simplest and most effective way to avoid this is by having at least one positive adult role model in a child's life. This is where Promises2Kids comes in.**

Each of our programs use volunteers as coaches guiding youth; including Guardian Scholars, Camp Connect, and even at our annual FORE KIDS Golf Tournament. For example, our Youth2Youth program at the Polinsky Children's Center (PCC) empowers former foster youth to provide peer support, mentoring, and advocacy to youth at the Center.

To learn more, support Coach A Youth, and invest in youth leadership development, visit: [www.bit.ly/coach-a-youth](http://www.bit.ly/coach-a-youth)

# Message from the CEO



Recently, we held our Guardian Scholars awards reception where we celebrated the accomplishments of our 24 college graduates. As I listened to youth talk about their experiences over the past year, I was in awe of all they had overcome to be the leaders they

are today. They have become wonderful role models to the other youth and are also volunteering their time to better our community. That night, as I looked around, I was moved by how many we are able to support, as we just welcomed in our largest class ever of 175 youth!

Our youth are continually developing and I am seeing leaders emerging in all of our young people. Among these, our Camp Connect Junior Counselors, youth who serve as leaders to their peers and help lead camp activities.

These young leaders encouraged me to think about what builds a leader, how the essential qualities are dependent upon what parents or caregivers, teachers, coaches, and trusted adults teach and have demonstrated through their own actions. Foster youth do not always have this support or role modeling.

**It's up to Promises2Kids to build this for them.**

We do this with a small but dedicated community of concerned companies, individuals, donors, friends, mentors and other volunteers. Our foster youth are fortunate to have this committed community to help them. But, imagine what we could build with even more of us there to lend a hand to foster youth.

I encourage each of you to join in building tomorrow's leaders. Reach out and volunteer or financially support our efforts this year. Become a part of creating a brighter future for foster children.

**Tonya Torosian, MSW, CFRE**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Promises2Kids

*Promises2Kids continues to provide comfort and hope to more than 3,000 foster children in San Diego who cannot live safely at home. Each day we strive to create a brighter future for foster children in San Diego.*

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# FORE KIDS!

*Dan McSweeney, Elliot Feuerstein, Bob Payne and Arthur Rivkin*



*Julian Kapchinskiy, Claude-Anthony Marengo, Tom Tabor and Steve Peltier*



*Johnny Gonzalez, Mike Schultz, Bob Salt and Bob Harris*



The Promises2Kids FORE KIDS Golf Tournament at La Jolla Country Club was a wonderful event! We are so grateful to Jeannie and Arthur Rivkin for once again hosting us, and helping us raise funds to support local foster youth. We'd also like to thank Claude-Anthony Marengo and Bob Salt for co-chairing the event once more.

In addition to a great day of golf, this year the Coach-A-Youth program gave several Promises' Guardian Scholars a chance to join the fun. Students spent the day golfing with Promises2Kids supporters, and had the chance to learn self-discipline, integrity, and communication skills, as well as network with real-world

professionals. It is not too late to support leadership programs for foster youth by making a gift to the Coach-A-Youth Campaign here: [www.bit.ly/coach-a-youth](http://www.bit.ly/coach-a-youth)

And of course, none of it would have been possible without our generous supporters. We'd like to thank Carrie Miller, Eligiloy, OH! Juice, La Jolla Cosmetic Surgery Centre, and all of our other sponsors.

The top three teams from our FORE KIDS tournament will also play in the Randy Jones Invitational in January 2019, where they will compete to raise even more funds for Promises2Kids.

## Coach-A-Youth with Promises2Kids



Coach-A-Youth is Promises2Kids' campaign dedicated to helping current and former foster youth learn the skills they need to achieve life's goals.

Did you know that foster youth who "age out" of the system at 18 face tremendous challenges? Nearly half are homeless within two years and 75% will need public assistance before they turn 24. For many youth, the simplest and most effective way to avoid this is by having at least one positive adult role model.

This is where Promises2Kids comes in. We provide current and former foster youth with caring adults, who serve as mentors and coaches. Each of our programs use volunteers

as coaches guiding youth; including Guardian Scholars, Camp Connect, Men's and Women's Leadership Networks, and even at our annual FORE KIDS Golf Tournament.

You can help us provide the support our foster youth need year-round by participating in the Coach-A-Youth campaign! Through October 31st, provide the support foster youth need year-round. Create your own fundraising page to make a gift or start a fundraising team at: [www.bit.ly/coach-a-youth](http://www.bit.ly/coach-a-youth)

Share your fundraising page with family, friends and colleagues. Join today and make a difference in a child's life!

*A special thanks to our  
Coach-A-Youth Sponsor,  
Carrie Miller, Realtor*





## Shopping Days for Foster Youth

Thanks to the generous support of a community member, we were once again able to hold our annual Back to School shopping event, where foster youth had the opportunity to get school supplies and clothing to start the new school year with confidence! The goal of our annual Back to School Shopping event is to equip eligible foster youth with school supplies and clothing, enabling them to start the new school year ready for success.

Starting the school year out with new clothing gives kids the confidence they need in the classroom, where they acquire the knowledge and skills needed to advance their education. Thanks to the community's support, Promises2Kids was able to take nearly 900 students on a shopping spree so they could choose their own back to school attire. Students received more than \$250 to shop at Old Navy, H&M and Costco. This has become a tradition for Promises2Kids, all put in place by one caring man who knows the importance of feeling good about yourself and feeling loved. This is one way we work with our caring community to create a brighter future for foster children in San Diego County.

## Businesses Can Brighten the Holidays for Foster Youth

This holiday season we encourage our corporate friends to reach out to their many contacts, both within and outside of their organizations with a special message: help us provide hope, support, and the opportunities children in foster care need to change their lives for the better, now and for years to come.

Ways you can help:

1. Consider initiating an employee campaign to support our cause, gifts as small as \$25 make a big impact. You can even offer to match the funds raised with a corporate donation.
2. During your company party offer a charitable component that allows your employees to sponsor a child's wish with a gift of \$25 and higher when pulled from the Promises Wish Tree. Promises2Kids team members and Youth Ambassadors are happy to attend and speak to the group.
3. Use Promises2Kids Business to Business Holiday Campaign Kit to engage your business associates and clients in your commitment to Promises2Kids. Use our online resources, youth stories, and information to inspire them to support a foster child's wish this season as well.

Every contribution helps us meet the needs of the children and youth who come to our doors and into our heart.

We recognize there are many wonderful and deserving charities in our community who deserve the support of the community. We are deeply honored that you have placed your kindness and support with us.

For more information, please contact Karen Neal at [karen@promises2kids.org](mailto:karen@promises2kids.org).





# Birthday Club

For a small child living in a shelter or waiting to be adopted, each day can seem like a lifetime. Special days, such as birthdays, often go by unnoticed. No child should spend their birthday alone or without a special gift because of difficult family circumstances beyond their control. And that is why we created the Birthday Club.

The program provides children ages 18 and under, living in shelters or in foster care with a birthday gift card on their special day. It is sometimes the only gift they receive. The gift not only gives the children a chance to pick out their own special gift, but it also sends a message that someone cares, and that they have not been forgotten.

*Pear promises 2 kids thank you so much for the gift card it means so much to me cause this is the first time I celebrate my birthday and I'm so happy to really know how much support I have*  
-Love Madison

## Volunteer Spotlight



Michael Rice has been volunteering at Promises2Kids since September 2016. He has given his time and compassion to our Camp Connect Summer Camp for 3 years and was delighted to return again this year saying "I was so pleased to help celebrate Camp Connect's 10-year anniversary, and

this year's Summer Camp was the best one I have ever attended. I love that the volunteers experience camp along with the youth and engage in the fun. Having challenges that both volunteers and youth had to accomplish together brought us all closer and allowed us to overcome fears and motivate one another."

Michael, a resident of Mount Laguna, learned about Promises2Kids from a news report that men were needed for Camp Connect. The idea that siblings couldn't live together and that Promises2Kids was an organization committed to bringing these youth together, moved him to want to volunteer.

Michael not only volunteers for Camp Connect, but also helps with Guardian Scholars and Fundraising Events. He has volunteered for more than 315 hours for Promises2Kids through 23 different activities.

"The best thing about volunteering is seeing the kids and having fun experiences with them. It takes a lot of energy to volunteer, but it is worth it and the Promises2Kids staff do an amazing job."

Michael is currently waiting to be matched as a Mentor.

## Corporate Spotlight

Jami Voge and Emily Hester, a mother-daughter team, created JoJo's Creamery as an outpouring of their love for baking warm chocolate chip cookies, visiting neighborhood ice cream shops, and mentoring teenagers and young adults. Jami and Emily are passionate about providing job training and mentoring to young adults entering the workforce for the first time, especially those who have overcome significant obstacles in their life.



Its business plan incorporates our mission and the creamery does this by supporting foster youth and employing some of our Guardian Scholars through part-time jobs and teaching them how to operate a business and become an entrepreneur. Emily's husband Ben currently serves as a coach for our Men's Leadership Network.

JoJo's is almost entirely organic and uses organic dairy for all dairy-based flavors and organic coconut milk, organic coconut cream, and organic cashew milk for its vegan flavors. Additionally, JoJo's always buys organic when purchasing the most of its ingredients.

Emily and her husband Ben, along with Jami and her husband Bill, have been supporting Promises2Kids Guardian Scholars since 2014. JoJo's supports and admires the work of local organizations that invest in teenagers and young adults in San Diego.

Thank you to Jami, Emily, Ben and Bill for your passionate and generous support of our foster youth.



# Congrats Guardian Scholars Grads



## **Alliyah Leonard**

Alliyah received her AA in Psychology from Palomar College and is returning to school to pursue her degree in Exercise and Nutrition Sciences. Alliyah is pursuing a career in the field of nutritional well-being.

## **Bianca Cardenas**

Bianca received her MS in Counseling from San Diego State University. She's passionate about giving back to youth that are of a marginalized community and wants to be an advocate to help them navigate the systems.

## **Catalina Soto**

Catalina is completing her BA in Communications from California State University, San Marcos. She is currently enrolled in her last class and is pursuing a career in human resources to support professionals in the workforce.

## **Danielle Tramontini**

Danielle received her BS in Finance from San Diego State University and maintained a GPA above 3.0 throughout her college education. She recently passed her finance certifications and is now licensed to advise people about financial decisions.

## **Dwaine Collier**

Dwaine is completing his BA in Visual & Performing Arts from California State University San Marcos. Dwaine is excited to complete his degree and is looking to expand his education in the VPA field.

## **Erika Briceno**

Erika received her BA in Psychological Sciences from California State University San Marcos. She is currently working in human resources and has a goal to become an Industrial Organizational Psychologist.

## **Helena Kelly**

Helena received her BA in Psychology from Ashford University and will soon enter a master's program. She has a goal of becoming a school psychologist.

## **Ivan Chavez**

Ivan pursued a double major and received his bachelor's in Business Administration and Arts and Sciences from San Diego State University. Ivan is looking to further his education and is currently working with former foster youth.

## **Jamie McDaniel**

Jamie received her AA in Social Work from Cuyamaca College. She is looking forward to working in a field that will allow her to help foster youth navigate through the system.

## **Jessica Vallejo**

Jessica received her BS in Public Health from San Diego State University. She wants to help low income communities overcome poor eating habits. She recently started a master's program at the University of Maryland.

## **Josue Hernandez**

Josue received his BA in Philosophy from the University of California Los Angeles. Josue has plans to return to school and earn his MBA. He recently moved back to San Diego and is looking to gain work experience before applying to graduate school.

## **Kassandra Gutierrez**

Kassandra received her AA in Child Development at Southwestern College and will soon transfer to Point Loma Nazarene University to complete her BA. She is part of a pilot program that allows students to take classes towards their BA at the community college.

## **Katrina Watson**

Katrina received her BS in Biology from National University. She is pursuing a career in project management or regulatory affairs, where she'd like to assist in ensuring the safety and quality of administered drugs and medicines.

## **Kesia Williams**

Kesia received her MA in Organizational Management from Ashford University. She is looking to further her career working in higher education and has a dream of one day becoming a Dean at a college campus.



### **Lebari Sunday**

Lebari is working towards his BA in Sociology from Humboldt State University. He is looking to pursue a career that will help support his family. Lebari is the first person in his family to earn a college degree.

### **Linneth Quintana**

Linneth received a Yoga Certification at Mira Costa Community College. She currently works in the exercise field teaching yoga at the Chopra Center. She is excited to continue her education in the field and hopes to start her own business in the future.

### **Maria Brown**

Maria received a Paralegal Studies certificate from Phoenix Community College. She is working at a law firm in Phoenix and is excited to learn how the field of law works to support clients and families.

### **Maria Aguilar**

Maria received her BS in Biochemistry from UC San Diego and is currently seeking a position in the biotech field. She recently started the interviewing process and is excited to start her professional journey.

### **Megan Gordon**

Megan received her AA in Sociology from Palomar Community College. She transferred to California State University San Marcos with a 3.5 GPA and is working towards her bachelor's degree. Megan wants to work on policy for foster youth.

### **Raul Enciso**

Raul received his MA in Leadership Studies at the University of San Diego. He is working with youth to help support them with their emotions and set goals for positive development. He is looking to further his career working with current and former foster youth.

### **Ruby Castro**

Ruby received her BA in Literature & Writing Studies from California State University San Marcos. She is currently pursuing her MA in Counseling. Her goal is to become a foster youth liaison for the school district to help support youth earning their education.

### **Suzy Lee**

Suzy received her BS in Health Science from California State University Channel Islands. She is now pursuing her MA in Health Administration and California State University Northridge and is working full-time at a hospital.

### **Travis Doderlein**

Travis received his BS in Business Administration from San Diego State University. He recently started his career as a recruiter for a mortgage company in San Diego.

### **Veronica Arellano**

Veronica received her BA in Social Work from San Diego State University. She is excited to work as a case manager working to support clients with mental health issues.

## Brothers Together at Camp Connect



Max was 8 years old when he entered foster care due to neglect from his mother, precipitated by her constant abuse of drugs and alcohol. To keep himself fed and clothed, Max learned to steal money from his mother before she used it on drugs and alcohol. This was his survival skill.

Max has three siblings; two he has no contact with and he has not seen his 10-year-old brother Chris in more than six months. The last time they saw each other was at our Camp Connect LEGOLAND event. The moment they saw one another they embraced and began discussing all the exciting activities they were looking forward to at camp. Max's brother told him how he was going to participate in the zip line and rock wall activities, two experiences he was

afraid of the previous year. When the brothers arrived at the zip line, Chris was to be frightened and said that he did not want to do it. Max tried to encourage him and even let Chris know he was scared as well. Chris yelled, "Stop trying to be my dad." This frustrated Max and he became upset with his brother. Chris, too, became very upset and ran off to speak with his group volunteer.

Max on the other hand was ready to leave. He spoke with the Promises2Kids staff and volunteers and said, "I could be making \$150 day, but instead I chose to be here". His counselor, Carlos, replied, "Money comes and goes, but family lasts a lifetime". Max decided that since he had only seen his brother one time in the past six months and misses him when they're apart, that he would stay and work things out. Hours later the brothers were laughing and joking while eating shaved ice. For the rest of the Camp the brothers were inseparable.

On the final day, as the brothers were loading on the bus to head back, Max walked up to Promises2Kids staff and volunteers and said, "Thank you both for helping me decide to stay. This was the best weekend I have had in a long time."

Through Camp Connect Max was able to see the importance of spending time with his brother and that sticking through hard situations makes relationships that much stronger.

# BOMA Back to School Drive

The Building Owners & Managers Association (BOMA) has been a long supporter of Promises2Kids and foster care hits close to home for one of BOMA's Community Service Committee's Co-chairs, Dennis Dubert. Dennis was raised in a home that served as a foster home to many of San Diego's foster youth. His mother, Pat Dubert, who is still a foster parent, has been a selfless provider for over 45 years, fostering more than 600 children and adopting three.

"It was difficult for me to share my mother," said Dennis. "As I got older, I better understood the impact that she was having in the lives of children. I'm deeply honored to follow in my mother's footsteps and serve as co-chair of the Annual Back-to-School Drive for Promises2Kids."



Promises2Kids, one of San Diego's foremost nonprofits with a focus on foster care and children's welfare, received a donation of 937 backpacks and lunch bags, along with school supplies, from BOMA. BOMA has partnered with Promises2Kids for more than 25 years on the organization's annual Back-to-School Drive and the Give From Your Heart holiday gift drive.

Most children attend their first day of school sporting a brand-new backpack filled with new school supplies, ready for the new school year and prepared for success. Foster youth in San Diego may not have the same privilege. BOMA's Back-to-School Drive provides students in Promises2Kids' program with the supplies they need to have a successful school year.



## Congrats Stephanie!

Stephanie Segal Ortega, Promises2Kids' COO, was recently honored with the Nonprofit Visionary Award at San Diego Magazine's 2018 Celebrating Women Awards.

Stephanie started with Promises2Kids 13 years ago to work as a coordinator in our Guardian Scholars program. She grew and led this program to achieve its current level of success. Additionally, Stephanie created a mentoring component for Guardian Scholars and implemented Junior Guardian Scholars to ensure foster youth in high school are provided the same educational opportunities and career exposure all youth should receive.

The Nonprofit Visionary Award is given to an outstanding individual in recognition of her impactful service and special contributions to their community, civic or charitable organizations with a goal to celebrate women who've made an extraordinary effort and impact on others.

## Make a Difference

Our volunteers and mentors make a difference at Promises2Kids! It's a great way to meet new friends, give back to your community and make a difference in our foster youth's lives. Become a volunteer or mentor today. To learn more contact Lenny Leszczynski at: [lenny@promises2kids.org](mailto:lenny@promises2kids.org)

