

January is National Mentoring Month

January is National Mentoring Month. Oprah Winfrey said that, "A mentor is someone who allows you to see the hope inside yourself." Statistics show that when young people are paired with a mentor, their success rates are substantially higher.

Promises2Kids understands that everyone needs mentorship at various points in their lives and that mentorship may look different for each young person. Promises2Kids is fortunate to have over 80 community volunteers currently mentoring our Guardian Scholars students.

Every Guardian Scholar living in San Diego is matched with a mentor who provides personal, academic and career guidance. From speaking about navigating classes to the roommate who you don't get along with, one-on-one mentorship offers students a supportive and permanent connection.

Additionally, group mentorship is available through our Leadership Networks, where mentors provide that crucial support for young adults transitioning into adulthood. Our mentors offer a listening ear when students are headed to an

interview and sound advice when they need it. The Leadership Network offers all of the necessities students need as they are leaving college and entering their careers.

Mentors play a significant role in a student's life. They teach them about building meaningful relationships, are role models and in some cases, are considered family.

Mentors are matched with students when they first come into the program and they remain paired until college graduation. Though the connection formally ends upon graduation, mentors stay with their students long after becoming a permanent fixture in the life of their mentee.

Mentorship at Promises2Kids is a critical component of the Guardian Scholars program. All of the mentors volunteer their time and are 100% dedicated to creating a brighter future for a foster youth. Many mentors have said that they get more out of their relationship than they ever thought possible. It is a learning process for them, as much as it is for the mentee. If you are interested in becoming a mentor, we are accepting applications now for

matching in June. Please contact Lenny at 858-751-6616 or at lenny@promises2kids.org.

Volunteer Spotlight: Stephanie!



Candace with her mentor, Stephanie

Mentoring a young adult is about meeting them where they are and helping them become the best version of themselves. That is where Stephanie came in for Candace; providing her with guidance as she faced new challenges. Candace had recently returned to school and was working toward a nursing career. While she was on track personally, blending new school challenges was difficult. Stephanie became and has remained a key advocate and support for Candace, for nearly two years. Most recently, Stephanie encouraged Candace to get a passport to visit her boyfriend who had been deployed. They worked on a plan to get the passport and the savings necessary to purchase the ticket. Candace was ecstatic when she met her goal and will, for the first time, leave the United States. Stephanie has become an important part of Candace's support system, even offering emergency housing, as she has moved into adulthood without the support of the foster care system.

Message from the CEO



As I reflect on 2017, I am overjoyed by everything the San Diego community has accomplished. We have consistently proven with our united efforts that we can provide foster youth with the support they need to beat the odds, overcome their challenges, and turn their dreams into reality.

2017 was a year of exciting changes, for myself and Promises2Kids. Recently becoming a first-time parent has given me a new perspective. I cannot imagine my son having to grow up feeling alone, and lacking a stable support system. I am now more grateful than ever for the community that works so hard to make a difference for foster youth in San Diego.

Though the past year has brought many positive changes, there is still work to be done. 2018 is a new beginning for foster youth. By raising awareness, you give children a chance at a better life. **It's easy to think that you don't have what it takes to support a child in need, but even the smallest gesture makes a world of difference.**

Promises2Kids is 100% philanthropy funded. Every penny we spend to give foster children a brighter future comes from people in our community, people just like you. From donating, to volunteering and mentoring, your kind actions remind foster youth that someone out there truly cares about them.

I am hopeful that our community will continue to come together to make sure foster youth have all of the love, support, and opportunities that other children receive every day. I admire the resiliency I see in each child, and see the promising futures ahead of them.

Your generosity, commitment and investment in foster youth gives them hope. Because of you, foster youth have the chance to connect with others, learn, and grow. You are the reason we can continue our life-changing work. Thank you for helping us create a brighter future for foster children.

Tonya L. Torosian, MSW, CFRE

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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Siblings: A Bond That Should Never Be Broken

In 2017, Promises2Kids' Camp Connect expanded to serve even more children who are separated from their siblings in foster care. This time, it was serving children living in San Francisco and surrounding counties. San Francisco County has one of the highest rates of sibling separation in California.



Siblings take on an obstacle course together

This new camp was held November 19-20 at Alliance Redwoods Camp. Promises2Kids partnered with San Francisco County to create a memorable and amazing event for foster youth. Youth spent quality time with their siblings and created new memories, strengthening their sibling relationships.

The weekend began in Alameda where foster youth first reunited with their siblings. The bus ride to camp was filled with chatter and laughter as siblings caught up with one another; some not having seen each other in two years. Activities at camp included racing 40 feet into the trees on an obstacle course, swinging out of 100 feet tall redwood trees, and zip lining 150 yards, 50 feet above ground. During the activities siblings cheered and encouraged each other as they took on new challenges together. For most of the youth, this was their first time experiencing the wilderness.

On the last day, a sibling set of three had a conversation about life, and talked about making life changes. They discussed what they had accomplished together at camp and how it could be applied to their everyday lives. They agreed to refrain from allowing negative things to fuel their behavior and decisions, and to encourage each other to overcome their life obstacles the same way they helped each other overcome their camp obstacles.

Volunteers from ICW Group, Four Seasons Hotel San Francisco, and other community members provided leadership, mentorship and friendship that made this weekend possible. If you are interested in volunteering at the Summer San Francisco or San Diego Camp, please contact Lenny at 858-751-6616 or at lenny@promises2kids.org.

Corporate Spotlight: AimLoan Transforms The Lives of Foster Youth!

Since 2012, AimLoan has continually stepped up to help Promises2Kids meet the needs of San Diego County foster youth. Their support has allowed foster youth to reach their educational goals and has helped reunite separated siblings.

AimLoan recently hosted our Guardian Scholars Thanksgiving Dinner in their office space. Ninety attendees, comprised of Guardian Scholars and their guests had the opportunity to enjoy a wonderful meal and

share what they were thankful for with those closest to them. This unforgettable gesture made our foster youth feel incredibly special and loved. Events like this would not be as amazing as they are without the generosity of AimLoan and its employees.

Thank you for all that you do AimLoan! Your commitment means the world and your continued support is truly changing lives.



Making Holidays A Little More Cheerful This Year



Wendy's volunteers who helped sort and distribute gifts

During the holidays, children in foster care should not have to go without the simple pleasures of enjoying the magic of being a child. Promises2Kids was thrilled to host the 24th Annual BOMA Give From Your Heart Holiday Gift Drive presented by Carmel Mountain Preschool, to brighten the lives of foster children during the holiday season.

With the support of hundreds of local business, families, and community partners, Promises2Kids collected over 13,500 gifts and nearly \$6,000 in gift cards. Together we collected gifts for foster youth ages 0-21 from playpens to Legos, remote control cars to electronics, and a large assortment of bikes. Typically, we receive a limited number of gifts for teenagers but this year, we had so many people donate gift cards, that we were able to make many of the teens' holiday wishes come true. Having a gift to open means the world and shows them that there are people out there like you who truly care about them.

Social workers and foster agencies were over the moon when they were informed that they could select more than one gift for their children this year. Natalie from South Region Child Welfare Services said, "We appreciate all of the hard work and because of it, the children here, were ALL able to have a Christmas".

A special thank you to Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA), Carmel Mountain Preschool, Harsch Investment Properties, Boyer Moving & Storage, KUSI News, Republic Services, Wendy's and members of the community who helped us provide San Diego County

foster youth with presents and gift cards during this difficult time in their lives.

Thanks to those of you who support us year after year. Because of your kindness, children in foster care got to experience the magic of the holidays!



A glimpse of some of the gifts that were collected for foster children

ANNUAL BOMA
GIVE
FROM YOUR
HEART
HOLIDAY GIFT DRIVE
PRESENTED BY
Carmel Mountain Preschool

Tis the Season to Brighten
the Lives of Foster Children!

PROMISES2KIDS



Other support provided by:

Bringing Joy At A Difficult Time Of Year



This year's holiday shopping event, made possible thanks to the generous support of an anonymous donor, touched the lives of nearly 900 local foster youth in San Diego County. Children were all smiles as they spent time at Costco or Walmart, choosing gifts for themselves and their loved ones, bringing joy to what might otherwise be a sad and lonely time of the year. Volunteers helped guide carts, overflowing with books, games, clothing and more, through check out lines while listening to exclamations of delight and gratitude.

One youth mentioned he was excited to purchase gifts for others. He was beaming while helpers rang up his cart, sharing who each gift was for and how he couldn't wait to wrap them.

Children also received a teddy bear; another way for them to feel loved and embraced throughout the year, an important aspect of what the holiday shopping experience is all about.

This year, older youth were given an opportunity to receive an iPad if they preferred that over the traditional shopping event.

The event could not have happened without the help of our partners at Costco and Walmart, our incredible staff and volunteers, and of course, our amazing donor who continually provides 100% of the funds for this program to ensure that foster youth are happy year after year.

Brightening The Holiday Season

The holidays brought great cheer and warmth to the Guardian Scholars family. This December, Annie Navarra graciously opened her home to 75 Guardian Scholars, their mentors, and a few other Promises2Kids supporters. Together we celebrated the end of the semester and the holiday season. Having a special moment to celebrate accomplishments is important to our students. Many of them do not have family members or other adults in their lives, that provide the positive support and guidance which everyone needs to keep them going.

Students enjoyed a buffet style feast from Executive Chef Isa Olloni and shared exciting stories; from Adrianna welcoming her sister home from Sacramento State, to Ruby expressing her excitement about completing her degree in December and enjoying a break before she begins her masters program.



A group of Guardian Scholars with Promises2Kids' Angela Aceves

Promises2Kids has become a family for many of our students. It is a place where they are welcomed and supported throughout their college career and beyond.

A special thank you to ID Analytics for their generous sponsorship of this event and to Annie Navarra for opening her home and her heart to our wondrous students. Your support allowed them to create new holiday memories and reminded them that they are a part of the loving, caring family that is Promises2Kids.

Local Family Opens Their Home To Host Thanksgiving



Kevin Prior prepares dinner

This year, Promises2Kids wanted to create a true family style Thanksgiving for our Junior Guardian Scholars. These youth are currently in high school preparing for graduation, and looking ahead to

college. When we decided to change from hosting this dinner at the office to taking it into a home, long-time supporters, Kevin and Raegan Prior, offered to host the event at their home. The entire Prior family welcomed over 40 Junior Guardian Scholars and friends into their warm and loving Rancho Santa Fe home, to celebrate Thanksgiving!

The evening began with everyone sharing what they were thankful for. Later, guests were treated to a lovely dinner provided by Jimbo's Natural Foods Grocer and closed with a slideshow of events from the year.

Thank you to Kevin and Raegan Prior for your hospitality and for supporting our youth!

Students Treated To A Traditional Thanksgiving



Mattress Firm volunteer team

Thanksgiving is a time to come together and celebrate the beginning of the holiday season. This past November, AimLoan hosted and for the 5th year Mattress Firm graciously provided a delicious turkey dinner with all of the trimmings for 90 guests, including Guardian Scholars, mentors, volunteers and others supporters.

Students talked about heading into finals and all of their amazing accomplishments throughout the semester. From first semesters at distant schools to graduation being so close, students shared their progress in college and all of their future plans with their mentors.

Some foster youth had never experienced a turkey dinner quite like this. This memorable occasion made each foster youth feel extremely valued. Thank you to AimLoan and Mattress Firm – this event would not have been possible without your support!

Wining And Dining For A Cause



Owen and Jolene Perry

On December 2nd, Jolene and Owen Perry welcomed guests into their stunning Rancho Santa Fe home and hosted an intimate 4-course Winemaker's Dinner to benefit Promises2Kids. Guests were treated to delectable cuisine prepared by Jeffrey Strauss, Executive Chef and Owner of Pamplemousse Grille. The

evening featured wines from Morlet Family Vineyards and Paul Lato Wines, and each course was perfectly paired with a signature wine. Throughout the evening, guests were also entertained by Steven Ybarra Music.

Thank you to Jolene and Owen Perry for opening up their home for this incredible evening, and for their continued

support of local foster youth. Because of this event and the generosity of our gracious hosts and everyone in attendance, Promises2Kids can continue offering programs to better the lives of foster youth in San Diego County. We could not do what we do, if it weren't for our amazing supporters.



Jeffrey Strauss and Jolene Perry

Foster Children Wish For The Simplest Things



Sixteen-year-old Michelle loves to draw. She is an aspiring artist who spends much of her time creating comic book characters; it's her way of coping with the trauma from her youth. When asking Michelle about her drawings, her inspiration, and all that goes into it, her face simply lights up! This way of coping developed into talent, and grew into a passion and dream of attending San Diego's Comic-Con.

She looked to Promises2Kids' Something Special Fund as a starting point of making that dream a reality. With tickets nearly impossible to obtain, a second idea was presented: attending San Diego Comic Fest. Michelle was overwhelmed with excitement! A few weeks later, the Something Special Fund provided her with two 3-Day passes to the event. Michelle's dream is taking shape, and she is about to discover a world full of magical possibilities of where her talent can take her.

Many kids love riding their bikes. Eleven-year-old Brody is one of those kids; he began BMX dirt bike racing once a week. He recently placed 2nd in a race! Since Brody began racing, his outlook on life has greatly improved, and he is making new friends. Unfortunately, his group home only has one bicycle to share, making it difficult for Brody to borrow on weekends. The Something Special Fund was elated to get him his own BMX dirt bike. Now that Brody has a bike of his own, he can take his BMX racing to a new level!



Promises2Kids' Something Special Fund provides support for foster children's special requests, that other children often take for granted. One small gesture of making their wish come true brings children like Michelle and Brody so much joy! To learn more about this and other Foster Funds programs, please visit www.promises2kids.org.

Golf Changes Lives

The Century Club of San Diego hosted this year's Farmers Insurance Open – San Diego's prestigious PGA TOUR event. In addition to being an amazing event for San Diego, they go above and beyond to help support local charities; Promises2Kids being one of those.

Through their primary charitable program called Champions for Youth, funds were raised to help us continue serving foster youth year-round.

We thank The Century Club of San Diego, Farmers Insurance Open and all of our donors for your generosity! Every dollar raised through this campaign will benefit foster youth, from helping them get through college to reuniting them with siblings who they have been separated from. Your gift is truly impactful and will positively change a child's life for the better.





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