



Creating a brighter future for foster children®

FULFILLING PROMISES

Winter 2019 Promises2Kids Newsletter



Victoria and Jacqui

The Power of Mentoring

Mentoring is a fundamental part of any young person's life, and even more so for a foster youth. As leadership expert John C. Maxwell has said, "One of the greatest values of mentors is the ability to see ahead what others cannot see and to help them navigate a course to their destination."

Victoria was in her second year at San Diego State University and her first as a Guardian Scholar when Jacqui entered her life. While she had benefited from the advice of older adults, Victoria didn't have anyone closer to her age who she could identify with, who having recently 'walked the walk' to adulthood could encourage her to take risks, but to do it in a smart way. Along with needing a consistent adult figure who she could count on, she needed a true friend.

Jacqui quickly became that person. She listened to Victoria and encouraged her to challenge herself. One of these challenges was to take an internship that she was initially hesitant about, but with the support of a caring adult decided to pursue.

Jacqui is more than a mentor to Victoria; she's an important part of Victoria's life because she chooses to be in it, not because she has to be. Being present, with genuine affection and without judgement, has made a huge difference as Victoria navigates college, car loans, relationships, and life in general.

Every youth in Guardian Scholars receives a mentor to guide and support them as they pursue their personal and professional goals. There are also group mentoring opportunities to help guide foster youth as they prepare for their careers and life beyond college.

All Promises2Kids mentors volunteer their time. Many have stated that they learn more than they ever expected from having a relationship with their student.

To become a mentor, visit www.promises2kids.org or contact Lenny at 858-751-6616 or at lenny@promises2kids.org.

Get involved! Volunteer or become a Promise Maker through a monthly gift.
To learn more or make a gift today, visit promises2kids.org

Message from the CEO



Each New Year brings the opportunity for renewed hope and achievement. For foster youth this can mean spending more time with siblings, having an exciting new experience, learning about a career that matches their skills and interests, earning a scholarship to pursue that career, or simply

receiving a gift from someone in the community who was thinking about them.

Because of you, hundreds of San Diego youth were able to realize these dreams last year. We watched 24 of our Guardian Scholars youth GRADUATE from college. Building on this success, we increased the number of students we will be able to serve this year through Guardian Scholars from 100 to 175! We started a new Camp Connect location in the Bay Area, and together with our ongoing Julian site, hosted 146 brothers and sisters who are not able to live together while in foster care. These youth joined and other separated siblings, their caregivers and their younger siblings (age 5 and under) at our quarterly family events, where their bonds continued to strengthen and many were able to have experiences they never would have had otherwise.

When something new begins, we look at the big picture...but as it unfolds we realize what matters are the moments, the people, and the feelings they inspire. For me, there is no better experience than being in a meeting with our Guardian Scholars youth and their mentors, at a picnic filled with laughing kids of all ages, or seeing a child receive a gift card on the birthday they were pretty sure everyone had forgotten.

Such moments are the fabric of the happy, fulfilled life we all want for these children. We can't do it without you. Help us create a brighter future for foster youth by making more of these moments possible in 2019. Best wishes to you and yours!

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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Siblings Creating Memories

The holidays are a special time of the year typically spent celebrating with family, but unfortunately that simply is often not the case for foster children. Many are separated from their siblings while in foster care and do not get to see them as often as they would like.

Through Promises2Kids' Camp Connect, 42 foster children were reunited with their siblings this year for some holiday fun! Together they attended the San Diego Gulls Winter Wonderland Tailgate where they participated in various festivities, which included playing street hockey and corn hole, sipping hot cocoa, creating arts and crafts, playing in the magical snow garden and of course getting their photo taken with Santa. Following this, siblings went to the hockey game and cheered on the Gulls as they faced off against the San Jose Barracudas.

Jake and his siblings have been separated in foster care for 3 years and had not seen each other in over two

months. They were excited to reunite and spend quality time together at this monthly Camp Connect event. For some foster children like Jake, this was their very first experience at a live sporting event and they had no idea what to expect.

Jake is usually very quiet and keeps to himself, but having this opportunity allowed him to open up more and connect with others including one of the volunteers. They high fived every time the Gulls scored and shared many conversations. Jake had not been that happy in a long time and was extremely thankful to staff and volunteers for what he said was a life-changing experience and something that he would never forget.

"Thank you for allowing me and my siblings to attend today. This was our first sports game we have ever been to and it was awesome. Thank you for being patient with me and teaching me the game of hockey," said Jake to a volunteer.

Mentor Carol Rolf and
Guardian Scholars
Johnathan and Edgar



A Thanksgiving to Remember

Thanksgiving is about coming together, and celebrating the start of the holiday season. This past November, ESET co-sponsored a wonderful Thanksgiving dinner for over 140 youth and their friends, families and mentors. In addition to ESET, volunteers from Mattress Firm served the meal and supported the event.

Guests shared what they were thankful for, took pictures with one another and (of course!) enjoyed a delicious traditional Thanksgiving dinner.

Thanks to ESET and Mattress Firm for their support of this special and unforgettable occasion!

Building Lifelong Traditions

Junior Guardian Scholars – those currently in high school who are preparing for graduation and their future – celebrated their Thanksgiving at a local restaurant with caregivers, friends, and Promises2Kids staff and Board Members.

For youth who often haven't experienced much holiday cheer, sharing a meal with people who are thankful for them and who care about what is happening in their lives can help start a wonderful tradition they never knew they could have.

Students expressed what they were thankful for, enjoyed a delectable dinner and watched a slideshow of their Junior Guardian Scholars program experience so far, the highlight of which was a trip to San Francisco to explore college and career options.

This warm celebration made students feel special and loved, and represented the true meaning of Thanksgiving!



Volunteer Spotlight: Jean Hoeger!



For the past 6 months, Jean has selflessly dedicated herself to our mission of creating a brighter future for foster children. Her commitment is evident not only through her words, but through her actions.

She began her journey with Promises2Kids volunteering

at the most recent summer camp this past August. All of the children in her group commented on how awesome she was.

During one particular interaction with Oliver, a 16-year-old boy who was not having the best time at summer camp and wanted to go home, Jean noticed his demeanor and also recognized the band on his t-shirt. While connecting with Oliver, she learned that this was his favorite band. Coincidentally Jean personally knows a member of

the band and months after camp, the young man received signed memorabilia from the band with a note that read, "Hope you enjoyed your time with our friend Jean!" He was thrilled and has since bonded with Jean even more.

She has volunteered over 150 hours at Camp Connect events, toy drives, shopping events and has written countless birthday cards for foster children.

Jean is a joy to be around. That goes without saying when foster children and fellow volunteers express their excitement when she enters a room.

Jean, we truly cannot thank you enough for all that you have done! In a short period of time, you have had a huge impact. You are the reason so many foster children like Oliver smile. We are lucky to have you as part of the Promises2Kids family!

For more information on volunteer opportunities, visit www.promises2kids.org or contact Lenny at 858-751-6616 or lenny@promises2kids.org.

Making the Holidays Brighter



Thanks to the generous support of the Dunn Family, in December nearly 1,000 foster children in San Diego were given the opportunity to shop for Christmas gifts.

Foster children shopped with smiles on their faces at Costco and Walmart, as they carefully selected gifts for themselves and their loved ones, bringing joy and excitement to what is too often a sad and lonely

time of the year. Shopping carts were full of gaming consoles, large stuffed animals, bikes and clothes, to name a few.

12-year-old Samantha was finally able to purchase the bike of her dreams! The bike she was previously given was too small, so this opportunity allowed her to pick out her own bike. She was so thrilled that she rode it to her foster mom's car upon leaving the store.

Another youth stated, "I want to say thank you so very much. Thank you for letting people like me do this. My holidays are better because of your kindness."

This holiday shopping event was made possible by our partners at Costco and Walmart, our staff and volunteers, and the Dunn Family who once again provided 100% of the funds for this event and volunteered personally to ensure that foster children enjoyed the holiday season!



Corporate Spotlight: ID Analytics Invests in Futures

When it comes to helping local foster youth, ID Analytics, a Symantec company, has stepped up to the plate. Since 2014, the company and its employees have supported foster youth in a variety of ways. This support has provided the necessary tools and opportunities for many foster youth to achieve their educational goals through Guardian Scholars, and for others to reunite with their siblings at Camp Connect.

They have been a comprehensive corporate partner for 2 years, funding a scholarship, sponsoring a holiday party and volunteering at many events. From assembling college care packages to opening their doors and educating high school students on different careers within their company, ID Analytics has done it all. They

have also aligned us with their parent company Symantec, to partner around an initiative which focuses on preventing foster youth from becoming victims of identity theft.

ID Analytics is a true example of a company that supports foster youth 360 degrees.

Many thanks to everyone at ID Analytics for everything they do, and their genuine commitment and continued support in truly bettering the lives of so many foster youth.

'id:analytics.
a Symantec company



Experiencing the Magic of the Holidays

Promises2Kids was overjoyed to host the annual *BOMA Give From Your Heart Holiday Gift Drive*, presented by Carmel Mountain Preschool. With overwhelming support from the community, lives of local foster children were brightened over the holidays. Having gifts to open means the world to children and shows them that there are people like you who truly care.

A total of 17,855 gifts and \$7,940 in cash donations and gift cards were collected. Gifts were donated for foster youth between the ages of 0-21 — from clothing, bikes and sporting equipment to stuffed animals, books and cosmetic items. The most sought out items this year were Star Wars action figures, Legos, remote control cars, hair dryers and lotions and scented items. People were ecstatic to see that so many of these items were available.

One former foster youth, now a mom, stated, "I was crying last night realizing that I didn't have toys to put under the tree for my baby girl, then I was told to come by and pick out toys for her and here I am. Because of you, I'll be able to give her a great Christmas."

"Thank you so much for helping out our kids. This makes all the difference. Our kids are going to have not

just toys, but shoes and clothing they've needed since their growth spurts. Thank you!" said an agency worker.

We would not have had another successful gift drive without the incredible support of BOMA (Building Owners and Managers Association), Carmel Mountain Preschool, Boyer Moving & Storage, KUSI News, BioMed Realty, Waste Management, John Hancock Financial and countless members of the community. Thank you all!

A special thank you to the many volunteers who selflessly devoted their time to help with the gift drive and to everyone who generously made a donation. It is because of your kindness that foster children were able to experience the magic of the holidays!



A Holiday Party Like No Other!



*Guardian Scholars
Cindy and Emilio*

On December 8th, the San Diego Convention Center hosted and welcomed 207 Guardian Scholars, mentors and supporters into their space to celebrate the end of the semester and the holiday season.

Karen Totaro, COO of the San Diego Convention Center, thanked those in attendance and expressed her excitement about being a mentor to Guardian Scholar Julia and how she looked forward to building their relationship.

Attendees enjoyed a tasty buffet, while foster youth created holiday cards and ornaments, had their picture taken at the photo booth and created elf name tags. During the final activity, each table had fun dressing up one person as a Christmas tree using different art supplies.

A huge thank you to ID Analytics for once again sponsoring the event and to the San Diego Convention Center for providing the space. Your support allowed foster youth to celebrate their achievements and create new memories, in a fun and loving environment! It was also a reminder that they are and always will be a part of the Promises2Kids family.

CONGRATULATIONS

to Promises2Kids Board Member

Danielle Humphries

Partner at Hahn Loeser & Parks LLP



for being selected as a...



San Diego Business
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Woman of the Year



WELCOME

to our new Board Members



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To the moon and back

Dream On

2019 CONCERT GALA

Save the Date - June 2019

Join Promises2Kids for a private benefit dinner & concert under a million stars at the Foxhill Estate of Papa Doug and Geniya Manchester

Artist announced in April

To sponsor or reserve a table contact
Lauren@promises2kids.org



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With a monthly gift, **YOU CAN CHANGE A LIFE... FOREVER**. Every bit counts.

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KNOW SOMEONE CARES.

Will you be that someone?



P R O M I S E S 2 K I D S

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LUKE'S STORY

Luke thought his name was "Idiot"...

That's because it was the only name his parents ever called him. When Luke was rescued by police at age 4, he was scarred and bruised all over his little body. His parents had beat him, tied him down, and left him for days without food.

As a Promise Maker, you will ensure that children like Luke are safe and receive the critical support they need immediately.