

Siblings Reconnect Thanks To You

Each summer, San Diego foster youth look forward to reuniting with their siblings over a four-day, three-night summer camp, full of endless fun.

This past August marked Promises2Kids' 11th annual Camp Connect summer camp, where 119 foster youth between the ages of six and 18 reconnected with siblings they were separated from while in foster care. The camp expanded to include those from Riverside and Imperial counties.



Foster youth embraced, smiled and cried tears of joy upon seeing each other for the first time in months, and for some, even years. They shared endless laughs and created new memories as they went swimming, rock climbing, ziplining and horseback riding, among various other exciting activities.

For 8 year old Madelyn, this was the beginning of a changed relationship for her and her siblings. Madelyn is the youngest of eight children in her family, who live separately in four different homes. Growing up deaf, it has always been difficult and frustrating for her to

communicate, especially with her oldest sister Molly who she had not seen in over two years.

Throughout the weekend, an interpreter worked closely with Madelyn and her siblings, teaching them how to do sign language. By the end of the camp, Madelyn and Molly were finally able to communicate with one another without the help of the interpreter.

Shortly after camp, Madelyn's family submitted a request to our Something Special fund and today, the entire family continues to take sign language classes. Their bond is now stronger than ever.

This summer camp was made possible thanks to the remarkable support of volunteers and generous members in our community! To learn how you can help, visit Promises2Kids.org.



Message From The CEO



Growing up as a child, I was fortunate to have the means to support my dreams. Like all children, these dreams are shaped by our experiences and evolve and change over time.

You may be surprised to learn that I was quiet as a child and not always the first to jump into something – I was an independent person, not as much into team sports and activities, as I was into individual challenges.

I played the violin beginning in first grade and continued into high school. My parents supported lessons, equipment and ensured I not only learned music but performed in orchestras and provided extra opportunities to build confidence.

I was a diver, as a club sport and in high school, and was a competitive gymnast from elementary school into high school. With each experience there was expensive equipment, lessons, fees for private and high school participation and this was on top of my brother's activities.

It wasn't until high school and later, that I realized that not all children had these same privileges. This wasn't "the norm" for everyone else. For some, this was a luxury and for most in foster care, it was never an option to participate in extracurricular activities.

All of these things are integral parts of life, social development, confidence and even education. Research on extracurriculars show that involvement in activities result in improved academic performance, higher self-esteem, better social skills and essential life skills.

That is why Promises2Kids expanded its support to foster children, allowing them to pursue their interests so they can develop a hobby or skill that will ultimately lead them towards a brighter and more successful future.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tonya L. Torosian".

Tonya Torosian, MSW, CFRE
Chief Executive Officer
Promises2Kids

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Meet Guardian Scholar, Ruby!



Growing up, my family and I experienced chronic homelessness. We often stayed under bridges and slept behind grocery store buildings in hopes of finding food. I would go to school with the same dirty clothes from the year before. My shoes had holes in them to make room for my growing feet. We had no running water and we hardly showered, so my hygiene was horrible. When I entered foster care, I had nothing. When the new school year came around, I was nervous to start school with the same clothes I had.

Thankfully, because of your generosity, I became part of the Promises2Kids family. I received a brand new backpack with school supplies that were all mine. As a kid, what I wanted most was clean clothes and shoes that fit my feet. Being able to buy clothes has

instilled confidence in me and makes me feel that someone, somewhere cares about me. I am more motivated to go to school and feel more prepared to do my schoolwork.

Opportunities like this have bettered my life and set me on the path towards success. This year I will earn my Masters in Educational Counseling and your support helped me get there. Thank you!

- Ruby

Heading Back To School With Confidence



Most children attend their first day of school with a brand new backpack filled with new school supplies and a brand new and carefully selected outfit. With these, they are ready to start the school year with self-assurance and are set up for success. Foster children do not have this same privilege and often dread going back to school for fear that they will be judged

or made fun of for wearing old clothes, or for not having any of their own school supplies.

Year after year, one incredibly generous community member makes it possible for Promises2Kids to host a back to school shopping event. This year, 800 foster youth had the opportunity to shop for necessities and

clothing. They were invited to shop at H&M, Costco and Old Navy, to ensure they were able to mark off all the items on their list.

Additionally, thanks to our long-time partner, the Building Owners & Managers Association (BOMA) and their annual Back-to-School Drive, 8,405 items were kindly donated to local foster children, including backpacks, lunch bags and an array of supplies.

It is far more than just clothing, a backpack and supplies. Foster children now have brand new items that belong to them. They are symbolic of a stranger's genuine interest in their well-being and overall success, enabling them to start the new year with the confidence that will assist them in acquiring the knowledge and skills they need to advance their education. Most of all, it shows them that people care and believe in them.

Thank you to the community member who makes our shopping event possible and everyone at BOMA San Diego for investing in the futures of tomorrow's leaders!

You Helped Make Dreams Come True

Heading into a new school is tough for any teenager, and even more so for a foster youth. For 15-year-old Oliver, making the high school football team has always been a goal of his. This year he took a leap of faith, tried out and to his surprise made the team! Being passionate about the sport for so long, this was a dream come true! Unfortunately he could not afford the equipment necessary to participate.

Due to the kindness of supporters like you, Oliver's request for football gear including a helmet, cleats, a mouthpiece and compression pants was granted through the Something Special fund, which allows foster youth to pursue extracurricular activities.

This has tremendously boosted his self-esteem and Oliver will now walk onto the football field with his head held high and ready take on his next challenge!



Corporate Spotlight: CPCU

CPCU (Society of Chartered Property and Casualty Underwriters) San Diego Chapter has been a supporter and advocate of Promises2Kids since 2014, assisting in multiple ways to help meet the needs of San Diego foster children.

They have raised awareness for foster care and Promises2Kids by featuring us at their luncheons and financially contributing year after year, specifically helping raise funds and awareness during the holiday season.

Promises2Kids was selected as the charity of choice for their national conference last year and benefited from funds raised through online

donations and raffle items that were auctioned off throughout the event. Additionally, care packages were assembled for both our Camp Connect and Guardian Scholars programs.

A big thank you to the CPCU team for your kindness and continued support! We could not do what we do without leaders in the community like you!



We Couldn't Do It Without You!

On Sept. 10th, Promises2Kids held its annual reception at The Winery Restaurant & Wine Bar in La Jolla.

Over 100 community leaders, donors, board members, volunteers and staff gathered on this beautiful night, enjoying delectable hors d'oeuvres and drinks throughout the evening.



*Merrilee Neal, Tonya Torosian,
Karen Sedgwick and Maryanne Smith*

Promises2Kids' CEO Tonya Torosian kicked off the reception by welcoming and thanking guests for their support, followed by former foster youth Ruby and Nina sharing their experiences in foster care and what it means to have the community's support. Both have overcome so much and are proof that when given the proper support, resources and hope, anything is achievable!

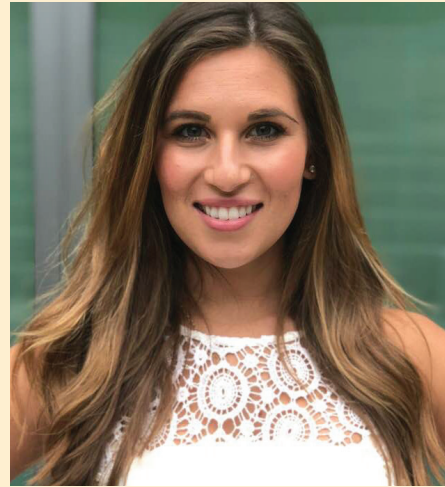
A special thank you to everyone in attendance! Your support helps foster youth reach their educational goals and reunites siblings who have been separated in foster care. YOU are the reason why we can continue creating a brighter future for foster children!

PHOTO CREDIT: Bob Stefanko, Ranch & Coast Magazine



*William Racz, Rachel Racz,
Stephanie Brown and Rob Pedersen*

Volunteer Spotlight: Dani Tildahl



Dani Tildahl became a volunteer in 2017 and has since, selflessly dedicated over 200 hours of her time to help make a difference in the lives of foster children.

After hearing about the opportunity through a friend and fellow volunteer, she immediately got involved by attending the annual summer camp, among several other Camp Connect events throughout the year. Dani is a natural leader, and easily and genuinely connects with every staff member, volunteer or foster child she interacts with.

Dani has a big heart and goes above and beyond to ensure that each child feels safe, has fun and truly enjoys each event, creating fun memories for each child.

"The best thing for me is that I get to bring joy and happiness to the events and we get to share and build memories... it is amazing to see how much these youth enjoy having people who care and how quickly you become attached... it can get exhausting but is definitely worth it," says Dani.

Dani, thank you for all that you do for foster children! You have had an immense impact on so many lives and are the reason why so many of them feel important and loved.

To become a volunteer, contact:
Patricia@Promises2Kids.org
or visit Promises2Kids.org

Coming Together To Provide A Trip Of A Lifetime



Southwest®

For several years, our community has come together to ensure that San Diego foster youth are on a level playing field and have the same opportunities as their peers, despite the circumstances they came from. This year was no different.

While most teenagers have their parents to take them to tour multiple colleges and prepare them for life after high school graduation, this unfortunately is not the case for foster youth. However thanks to the kindness of Southwest Airlines, and community members like you, 18 foster youth had the opportunity to experience a trip of a lifetime this past summer, over a four-day, three-night visit to San Francisco.

Promises2Kids' official airline – Southwest Airlines, started the trip with breakfast and a special behind the scenes tour at the airport. They also provided the airfare for the youth and chaperones, a total of 24 people.

Over the course of their visit, the youth toured several different college and university campuses including Cabrillo College, San Jose City College, Skyline College, San Francisco State University, San Jose State University, UC Berkeley and UC Santa Cruz.

They also explored career paths at Berry Appleman & Leiden LLP, Delancey Street Foundation, Habitat Horticulture and Netflix, all while networking with leaders in each industry who selflessly took the time to teach students about what it takes to be successful in that particular field and answering any questions they had.

Time and time again we see that when people like you join forces to support a common cause, so much can happen for a foster youth that positively impacts their life. YOU are the reason why foster youth can succeed, because they no longer have limitations on what they can or can't do. Foster youth returned empowered, inspired and more hopeful than ever.



Uniting To Improve Educational Outcomes



On September 30th, Promises2Kids hosted the *2019 San Diego Foster Care Education Summit* at the Sheraton San Diego Hotel & Marina. This year's theme "S.M.A.R.T", included powerful, energetic and interactive programs that

inspired and educated guests on the impact and importance of foster youth participating in and experiencing programs in Science, Math, Art, Resiliency and Technology. Youth had opportunity to display their creativity utilizing SMART tools as they discussed the barriers they have encountered and achievements they have had. The community also had the chance to learn from each other's resources and stakeholders. Workshops and presentations highlighted cutting edge SMART resources, programs, and studies that impact

foster youth, setting them up for a successful future.

Over 200 attendees including youth attorneys, teachers, school administrators, education liaisons, social workers and other professionals supporting the education of foster children were present. The event allowed advocates of foster youth to come together for one purpose – to improve the educational outcomes for youth in foster care!

A big thank you to the community and especially to our sponsors, for coming together to help make this event a huge success! This would not have been possible without your support.

Workshop Sponsor:



Foster Youth Voice Sponsor:



Youth Dinner Program Sponsor:

California Coast Credit Union

Leave A Legacy

A gift through your estate can help you change the lives of children for generations to come. Imagine being able to ensure that the next generation who come into foster care will have the hope of a better tomorrow.

Your gift will ensure that we are able to fulfill these promises. In addition to leaving a lasting legacy, estate or planned gift, options provide you with many opportunities for estate and tax deductions.

We are excited to share the Promising Futures Legacy Circle for those who have included Promises2Kids in their estate plans. Members enjoy invitations to presentations and events throughout the year and receive Promises2Kids publications highlighting youth stories.

For additional information or to share that you have included Promises2Kids in your estate, please contact Emily Hassig at 858.751.6624 or Emily@Promises2Kids.org.

*Participation can be anonymous

Congratulations Emily!



Promises2Kids proudly congratulates Chief Development Officer, Emily Hassig, who was recently honored as one of San Diego Business Journal's "40 Next Top Business Leaders Under Forty".

In the 3 years that Emily has been with Promises2Kids, she has grown the agency's impact significantly through her professionalism and fundraising expertise. Emily's loyal passion and commitment to fundraising set her apart from others in her field. She has an exceptional ability to connect funders and community champions to Promises2Kids, which ultimately benefits thousands of disadvantaged foster youth in San Diego County.



Presented by Jeannie & Arthur Rivkin

ENTER THE BRIGHTER FUTURES BALL DROP FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN \$5,000!

ALL WHILE HELPING MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN
THE LIVES OF SAN DIEGO FOSTER YOUTH

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2019

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