

Foster Futures Initiative: A Bridge To Stability

Promises2Kids is enthusiastic to have launched the ground-breaking pilot program, Foster Futures, providing foster youth with the resources and opportunities necessary to prevent homelessness, with generous financial support from Lucky Duck Foundation and the Regional Task Force on Homelessness (RTFH). Additional contributions were made by City Council and support from members Sean Elo-Rivera, Raul Campillo, and Stephen Whitburn.

Addressing media and supporters at the introductory press conference, Guardian Scholar, Dulce Pelayo, shared her own experience with housing instability – a story all too common for former foster children – and the resources she utilized on her way to success. She was joined at the podium by Promises2Kids CEO, Tonya Torosian, RTFH CEO, Tamera Kohler, Lucky Duck CEO, Drew Moser, and City Councilmember Sean Elo-Rivera, who all affirmed our commitment and resolve to make a lasting impact in this critical area.



As CEO of Lucky Duck, Drew Moser emphasized, prevention is critical to halting the cycle of housing instability, which is the foundation of Foster Futures. The program will provide direct cash support and vital programmatic follow-up, including intensive case management, financial literacy, career coaching, therapy, mentoring, and more.

A central piece of the new program is Makayla Scott, a former foster youth and Guardian Scholar, as Promises2Kids' Housing and Career Navigator. Makayla was previously employed at Promises2Kids as a Youth2Youth mentor, providing support and experience to children at the A.B. and Jessie Polinsky Children's Center. She also holds a position on the Advisory Committee of Lucky Duck Foundation.

"Taking on this role allows me to give back to the program that shaped me and to support others by sharing my lived experience. I want to show youth that success is possible and that they are not alone in their journey... This program is a lifeline that provides stability, guidance, and opportunities to help them transition into independence", shared Makayla.

Visit Promises2Kids.org for more information on Foster Futures and join us in creating a bridge to stability.

Message From The CEO



As we reflect on our mission and the impact we create in the lives of foster children, I want to take a moment to emphasize the profound significance of mentoring in their journeys. For many,

the experience of being in foster care can be overwhelming and isolating. However, with dedicated mentors by their side, these young individuals can unlock their potential, gain confidence, and navigate the complexities of life after foster care.

Mentoring provides a vital support system for current and former foster youth. It offers them guidance, encouragement, and a sense of belonging that is often missing from their lives. A mentor can be a listening ear, a trusted advisor, and a source of inspiration, helping them set goals and pursue their dreams. The relationships formed through mentoring can lead to increased self-esteem, improved academic performance, and better mental health.

As we continue our work, I urge each of you to consider how you can contribute to this vital aspect of our mission. Whether it's becoming a mentor yourself or supporting our mentoring program, every effort counts. Together, we can create a community where every foster child feels valued, supported, and empowered to reach their full potential.

Tonya Torosian, MSW, CFRE
Chief Executive Officer, Promises2Kids

Promises2Kids continues to provide comfort and hope to nearly 2,000 current and former 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.

Board Of Directors

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Brett Pernicano, Board Chair, Corient,
Partner & Wealth Advisor

Danielle Humphries, Vice Chair,
Hahn Loeser & Parks LLP, Partner

Paul Zamora, Immediate Past Chair, ICW Group,
Chief Underwriting Officer/SVP-Commercial Lines

Andrew Bolinger, Treasurer,
Gatto, Pope & Walwick, Tax Partner

Emily Green Lake, Secretary, Sisters Pizza, Owner

Joan Waitt, Juniper Development, President

MEMBERS AT LARGE

Arianne Bettazzi, Carmel Mountain Preschool,
Executive Director

Lynne Doyle, Community Volunteer

Elba Gomez, Port of San Diego,
VP of Administration/Chief Administrative Officer

Purvi Mehra, Community Volunteer

Carrie Miller, SD Homes by Carrie,
Keller Williams Real Estate, Realtor

Mia Park, Ranch & Coast Magazine, Editor-in-Chief

Dustin TenBroeck, President, Presidio Capital Management

Tonya Torosian, Promises2Kids, Chief Executive Officer

Alexis Villanueva, City Heights Community
Development Corporation, Executive Director

Steve Walton, Marrokal Design and Remodeling,
Senior Design Consultant, Director of Business Operations

Mark Wills, Loan Signing System, Owner

Abdi Yusuf, 33Persona, Business Development Director

FOUNDER EMERITUS

Rob Butterfield, Butterfield Schechter, LLP, Partner

L. Renée Comeau, Community Volunteer

Norma Hirsh, Community Volunteer

EMERITUS

Greg Cox, Retired, County of
San Diego Board of Supervisors, District 1

Bob Duggan, Marc-Aaron Realtors, Owner

Jackson Goodall, Jack-In-The-Box, Inc., Retired

Honorable Lawrence Irving, Retired

Papa Doug Manchester,
Manchester Financial Group, Chairman

Deborah Marengo, Marengo Morton Architects,
Vice President

Honorable James R. Milliken,
Judge of the Superior Court, Retired

Jeannie & Arthur Rivkin,
R Group Management Corp., In Memoriam

Joan Waitt, Juniper Development, President

Siblings Celebrate The Holiday Season

Camp Connect's annual holiday party holds a special in our calendar, bringing separated brothers and sisters together at a time when they may be missing each other most. This year, a total of 46 youth, including 19 sibling sets, participated in our holiday event at Balboa Park.

Arriving at The Old Globe Theatre, campers were transported to Whoville to take in the Christmas classic, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*. The party then moved to The Prado for lunch, festivities, and more. Brothers and sisters savored a traditional Christmas brunch while playing Grinch-themed bingo, constructing LEGO gingerbread people, and shaping their very own snowmen.

ICW Group Insurance Companies (ICW Group) has been a cornerstone of this celebration over the past several years, volunteering their time, and gifts from each child's wish list for the occasion. We are grateful to them once again for making this party special. The room was filled with joy and wrapping paper as brothers and sisters, regardless of age, gratefully showed their gifts off to each other. We are thankful for the care ICW Group continues to show to make sure that children had a magical day.

Thanks to supporters like you and ICW Group, this vital bond between siblings survives, creating memories to last a lifetime.



National Mentoring Month

National Mentoring Month, every January, is a time to celebrate the essential and transformative influence that mentors have in our own lives and in the lives of the youth we serve. Mentors come from all backgrounds, walks of life, and personalities. What they offer is different in each case, but in every case it is priceless.

Many foster youth grow up without the benefit of traditional support systems. Lacking the benefit of role models who lend them experience, insight, and make them feel less alone means that transitioning into adulthood is even more challenging and alienating than it needs to be.

Promises2Kids enthusiastically launched our own dedicated Mentoring Program last year and we are thrilled with how its grown into a vibrant and close-knit community both with 1-on-1 and group mentor relationships. We are grateful to have so many San Diegans sharing their experience, support, and kindness with current and former foster children. Thank you to all our current Mentors!

In San Diego, the lives of foster youth have been profoundly changed, thanks in part to the generosity of local philanthropist David Malcolm. With a \$75,000 matching gift to Promises2Kids, David inspired our community to come together and double his impact, resulting in \$150,000 in critical funding. This incredible support has been a driving force in expanding our mentoring program, allowing us to provide even more foster youth with the stable, long-term guidance they need to thrive.

I'm Katrina, a determined and passionate 24-year-old studying Business Management and Nursing. Over the past few months, I've focused on school, social justice-related projects within the AAPI community, mental health, and personal growth. I also work as a radio engineer, where I get to explore my creative and technical skills. Balancing school, work, family, and my relationship with my boyfriend has taught me time management, and self-care. I practice mindfulness and service to help me stay grounded and focused.

As a former foster youth, having a mentor has been transformative. One of the most meaningful moments was when a mentor took me out for gelato on my 21st birthday. It was a simple gesture, but it made me feel seen and celebrated, something I didn't always experience growing up.

My mentors through Promises2Kids black group have provided me with support, guidance, and belief in myself when I needed it most, showing me the importance of having someone in your corner. It's given me confidence and stability, allowing me to pursue my dreams. It has inspired me to work toward becoming an RN and advocate for foster youth. I want to offer others the same guidance and support I received. Mentorship has shaped my life in ways I will always value, and I hope to carry it forward as I continue to grow.

— Katrina



In 2021, I met my Promises2Kids mentor, Julie. This connection has grown to be one of the most valuable and symbiotic relationships I've ever had.

Throughout my academics and the challenges of motherhood, I can rely on Julie to give me clear and sound advice. One of the most recent challenges was related to changing my academic major. The rigor of pursuing a STEM major while providing for my toddler had become unreasonable. Julie helped me decide if pursuing a different major would be more beneficial than my original plan. Through the emotions of saying goodbye to one path and embracing a new field, Julie showed me that no matter what, she genuinely cares about my success whatever the case.



With her help, I will transfer to California State University San Marcos for the Spring of 2025 into the School of Communications and Media. I am so pleased to make my mentor proud! I am fully confident that as I carry out my studies at the University level Julie will continue to support and direct me in profoundly helpful ways.

We both don't know what's in store for me this upcoming year, but I know we will both conquer any obstacles together and celebrate even the smallest victories!

— Camryn

Having a mentor has had a big impact on my life. My mentor, Nancy, and I met on November 8, 2022. In that time, she has become an invaluable figure in my life. We talk often, and meet several times a month to go hiking, walk along the beach, attend cooking classes, or talk about goals that I would like to reach throughout the year.

Nancy is a great mentor, and I feel blessed that she has taken the time to invest in my personal growth. Simply having someone who cares checking in on you means so much to me.

She not only motivates me to stay focused on my goals but also inspires me to push myself and explore new opportunities. Her encouragement makes me feel more confident in tackling challenges that once seemed daunting. Nancy's ability to listen and provide constructive feedback has been invaluable, making me realize the importance of surrounding myself with supportive individuals.



Nancy is a great person inside and out, and I'm so grateful for her. Her support has not only encouraged me to pursue my goals but has also instilled a sense of confidence in my abilities.

— Lourdes

We encourage all to support our Mentoring Program through the "Every Mentor" Campaign with a gift of \$25 honoring the mentors in your life. Thanks to a generous match by The Century Club, every dollar given will be tripled up to a total of \$30,000. Donate online at Promises2Kids.org.

A Shopping Experience To Remember

The holiday season became more cheerful for nearly 900 foster youth who had the opportunity to shop at Walmart stores throughout the County and were able to fulfill their personal wish lists.

Headphones, video games, bikes, dinosaurs, dolls, and more! The carts were filled with gifts as varied as the personalities and interests of the youth who filled them.

Many who are in college or college-bound took a practical view, and purchased items for their future living-spaces, such as electronics and home appliances to make their transition to independence a little smoother.

Luz (6), Gwyn (9), and Ava (15) have been living apart in care for 4 years. This is one of the few Promises2Kids events that they're all able to see each other throughout the year.

Gwyn filled her cart with plenty of toys for herself, including her favorite, a Monster High Doll (Frankie Stein) because she said it represents her style – dressed in very colorful clothing.



But she didn't forget about her sisters, adding 3 Squishmallows (dinosaur for her, blueberry for Luz, and pink unicorn for Ava because it reminded her of a story that her sister would read to her about a unicorn). She was thrilled to have toys to gift her sisters, so when they cuddle them at night, they can think of each other.

This was truly a special opportunity for youth to leave the store with handpicked items. They left with items checked off their wish lists, big smiles, and an unforgettable experience!

We are thankful to all the volunteers who helped make this happen, and to the generosity of David Dunn and his family. Sadly, Mr. Dunn is no longer with us, but his legacy and spirit continues to help foster children through this special shopping experience.

CEO Advisory Council Members

Morgan Appel

Division of Extended Studies at UC San Diego,
Assistant Dean for Education and Community Outreach

Jaymie Bradford

Assistant General Manager,
San Diego County Water Authority

Honorable Ana España

Superior Court of San Diego County, Presiding Judge

Robert Gleason

Evans Hotels, President & CEO

Mel Katz

Manpower, Executive Officer

Chief Roxana Kennedy

Chula Vista Police Department, Chief of Police

Enrique Meza

U.S. Bank, Community Affairs Manager, San Diego,
Corporate Social Responsibility

Barbara Orozco-Valdivia, MPH

Vice President of Programs & Community Partnerships, Alliance Healthcare Foundation

Cathi Palatella

County Child Welfare Services Director, Retired

Nancy Rohland-Heinrich

National University, Executive Vice President,
Communications & Community Engagement

Warren Ruis

SDG&E, Director of Regional Public Affairs

Dr. Mark Sanchez

Southwestern College, Superintendent/President

Tonya Torosian

Promises2Kids, CEO

AJ Williams

Hammond's Gourmet Ice Cream, Owner

SPECIAL ADVISOR

Dr. Lidia S. Martinez

Special Advisor to the CEO

Guardian Scholars Get Into The Festive Spirit

The Guardian Scholars “Let It Snow” themed Holiday Party brought a conclusion to the year with a memorable party at Encore Event Center celebrating the vibrant, diverse, talented, and inclusive Promises2Kids community.

Nearly 250 Guardian Scholars, their families, alumnus, mentors, volunteers, donors, supporters, and Promises2Kids staff gathered at our annual celebration. Guests explored the snowy theme, decorating custom ornaments, crafting hot chocolate kits, and taking portraits both at our photobooth and with caricaturists providing keepsakes from this special night.

We are grateful to have Independent Financial Group (IFG) back again as the Presenting Sponsor of the event. Managing Director and Owner David Fischer, spoke on both IFG’s and his own personal attachment to our mission, while members from their team generously volunteered their time to help with the event.

All were treated to a special surprise as Guardian Scholar Alum, Brooklyn, shared her experience with Guardian Scholars. Since leaving the program a few years ago, Brooklyn has earned her master’s degree and excelled both in her career and in her

personal life as a mother. She urged current Guardian Scholars to make full use of the resources and support that have been so instrumental to her success.

The floor was then cleared, and all were invited to dance the rest of the night away!



Corey Polant with Independent Financial Group

Spreading Joy With Gifts



Wish lists were once again fulfilled this holiday season, through our annual Give From Your Heart Holiday Gift Drive, presented by Carmel Mountain Preschool.

Thanks to our supporters, gifts and gift cards were distributed to the roughly 2,000 foster children in San Diego! Our amazing community came together for our youth, and collectively we made sure foster children in San Diego enjoyed the holidays and received gifts to enjoy and call their own.

A special thank you to our Presenting Sponsor Carmel Mountain Preschool, and support from ICW Group Insurance Companies, Boyer Moving & Storage, and KUSI News for making our gift drive possible! And a big thank you to the incredible volunteers, businesses, individuals, and community groups who donated and brought joy to the lives of many very deserving foster children.



An Evening at Pamplousse Grille

Exclusive Gourmet Wine Dinner
Featuring Paul Lato Wines

Monday, February 3rd
6pm Reception 7pm Dinner

Executive Chef and Owner Jeffrey Strauss has
crafted an elegant 4-course meal.

Each course will be paired with two hand selected wines.

\$450 per person (includes tax and gratuity)
Limited Availability

For more information or questions, email
JenniferJ@Promises2Kids.org or call 858-751-6603.

Promises2Kids.org/Pamplousse



Powered By



CHANGE⁴CHANGE

SPARE CHANGE CAN CREATE
BIG CHANGE FOR SAN DIEGO
FOSTER YOUTH!

THAT'S WHY PROMISES2KIDS IS PROUD TO PARTNER
WITH ICW GROUP TO LAUNCH CHANGE 4 CHANGE.

SIGN UP NOW to connect your credit or debit card, and our
online platform will automatically round up every time you swipe
until you've reached your set giving target for the month.

Let's show foster youth just how powerful pennies can be!

Scan here to get started

