

Promises2Kids

Creating a
brighter future for
foster children for
over 40 years.



PROMISES2KIDS



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OUR PROMISE: TO CREATE A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR FOSTER CHILDREN

In every one of the 3,000 current and former foster youth in San Diego County, there exists untapped potential that's waiting to be discovered and nurtured. These children, having faced adversity and hardship, hold within them the spark of a brighter, more successful future. This is where your support becomes crucial.

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- **Over 90% of foster youth will never graduate from college.**
 - **Foster children move an average of 7 times before they age out of foster care.**
 - **35% of youth are living apart from their siblings, or are separated from at least one.**
 - **80% of youth experience mental health issues as a result of their abuse; most often depression or PTSD.**
 - **Youth in foster care are 2.5 times more likely to contemplate suicide and 4 times more likely to attempt suicide.**
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IN REFLECTING ON THE PAST YEAR, I am grateful for the kindness our community has shown to foster children. We have expanded services to meet their changing needs and ensured that they feel loved and have someone in their lives they can turn to for support.

During our 2022 Camp Connect Summer Camp, I was sitting with a sibling set, helping them create a scrapbook so they could have pictures of each other and capture positive memories, when I was approached by a young boy who had been crying. He was overwhelmed by the thought of camp ending the next day and not being able to be with his brother, as they lived apart. He asked why camp had to end. It broke my heart. For several years we have considered expanding camp, and this year, we extended it to a full week, and we opened up a few days to other foster children, with or without siblings. This was only possible thanks to individuals who funded this additional camp.

I'm also proud to share that we were able to accept all 341 applications for Guardian Scholars this year! These youth worked towards their educational and career goals by pursuing vocational training, a certificate, community college, or university education.

As we enter another year, I'm excited for what's to come. We will continue our work and build on our foundation for the future, and I hope you'll continue to show foster children that they matter and are loved.

TONYA TOROSIAN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

FROM THE MOMENT THEY ENTER FOSTER CARE AND THROUGH ADULTHOOD, PROMISES2KIDS SUPPORTS FOSTER CHILDREN THROUGH THESE PROGRAMS



GUARDIAN SCHOLARS

Assists current and former foster youth in reaching their educational and career goals. *Guardian Scholars has an 85% success rate for participating former foster youth, compared to less than 5% of foster youth nationally who will complete college.*

CAMP CONNECT

Reunites brothers and sisters who are separated and living apart in foster care. *167 brothers and sisters were reunited this past year.*

FOSTER FUNDS

Provides financial support to foster youth for sports, music classes, class photos, college application fees, and tutoring. *Over 200,000 children in need have been helped and supported by Promises2Kids.*

A.B. & JESSIE POLINSKY CHILDREN'S CENTER

Provides critical services, an emergency shelter and support for abused and neglected children. The San Diego County Child Abuse Hotline receives reports of abuse for nearly 70,000 children annually. *768 children were cared for through the Polinsky Children's Center this past year.*



GUARDIAN SCHOLARS

Supports current and former foster youth with mentoring, case management, and a financial scholarship to pursue their educational and career dreams, and advance to complete their vocational training, community college, or university education.

CAROLINA (23) ENTERED CARE AT AGE 9. Her mother struggled with mental instability, and due to neglect, Carolina was removed and separated from her brothers and sister. Her siblings stayed with their biological fathers, and only Carolina remained in care, isolated and alone. She felt different, as though she was the problem. She went on to 11 placements and eight schools before turning 18, lacking the stability she needed.

She joined Guardian Scholars in 2022, pursuing her career and seeking a stable, supportive community. Higher education is her path to financial and personal freedom. She is attending San Diego State University, earning her criminal justice degree, and plans to join law enforcement.

Carolina is immersed in Guardian Scholars. She is an avid participant in Advocates for Change, a specialty group that offers public speaking preparedness and empowers her to tell her story, affecting change in the community. She also receives professional guidance from community leaders in the Women's Leadership Network. Through these groups, she finds a stable community. She is grateful for shopping events that provide new and professional clothes, giving her confidence as she prepares for life after college. Monthly care packages also remind her that there are always people behind her.

As a Youth2Youth mentor, Carolina provides guidance and support to current foster youth, gratefully giving back because others have and continue to help her.

85%
of Promises2Kids
Guardian Scholars complete
higher education compared
to less than 5% of foster
youth who graduate
college nationally.

CAMP CONNECT

Reunites brothers and sisters who are separated in the foster care system through a six-day, residential summer camp and 10 additional day events throughout the year.

167

brothers and sisters were reunited through Camp Connect this past year.

JADEN (15) AND CHLOE (13) ENTERED FOSTER CARE IN 2016 due to the abuse and neglect they experienced at home. Unfortunately, they were separated and are living apart. Through Camp Connect, they get to see each other monthly.

Since joining Camp Connect, Jaden and Chloe know their next visit is never that far away. In addition to their sibling visits, they've gone on trips with other Camp Connect siblings to SeaWorld, LEGOLAND, and Knott's Berry Farm. They've even enjoyed the annual traditional overnight summer camp in the mountains together.

On their most recent visit, they realized neither had been to Dave & Buster's. When they arrived, they were overwhelmed by the choice of games and ended up playing most of them. Then, the claw machine caught Jaden's eye. He wanted to win a stuffed animal for his sister. It was not easy, but after the 7th attempt, Chloe had a big pink plush sloth in her arms. Jaden was on a roll and even walked away with his own large stuffed plush. The siblings enjoyed this special moment and brought home a sentimental gift to remember the day and each other.

Before leaving, they were already planning what they wanted to do on their next visit. Days like this creating special memories mean the world to siblings like Jaden & Chloe.





FOSTER FUNDS

Foster children often feel alone and isolated and may go without simple pleasures of childhood such as birthday gifts, a sports uniform, a musical instrument, or extracurricular activities. Promises2Kids has special funds set up to support these needs not met through typical funding.

PAUL (7) ENTERED CARE WHEN HE WAS 4 YEARS OLD. He was removed from his home due to neglect and severe abuse. Since entering care, Paul has experienced a great deal of change, having lived in four different homes in 3 years.

To bring some normalcy to his life, Paul was interested in Jiu-Jitsu classes, which were new to him, but he was open to going out of his comfort zone. His caregiver reached out to Promises2Kids, and through the Something Special Fund, Paul's request to start attending Jiu-Jitsu classes was funded.

Before starting, Paul had low self-esteem, and as a result, he had trouble making friends. He also struggled academically, finding it hard to focus in class. However, since starting Jiu-Jitsu, Paul's grades have improved and he has made many friends. His Jiu-Jitsu classmates have welcomed him, inviting him to playdates and birthday parties, all new to Paul. Through Jiu-Jitsu, Paul has learned the importance of self-discipline, focus, and goal-setting, and as a result, he earned his three stripes.

Jiu-Jitsu has become the highlight of his week, so much so he has invited his classmates at school to join. His self-esteem has increased and he is more outgoing than when he started the classes.

639

foster youth were
provided financial assistance
through Foster Funds
last year.

A.B. & JESSIE POLINSKY CHILDREN'S CENTER

Established as an emergency shelter for children unable to remain at home due to abuse or neglect, the A.B. and Jessie Polinsky Children's Center serves foster youth in San Diego County. Promises2Kids raised \$12 million to build this 6-acre facility and continues to fund programs for the children at the Center since its opening in 1994.

60,000+
children have been cared
for since 1994 at the
Polinsky Children's
Center.

MANNY, A 9-MONTH-OLD BOY, was placed at the A.B. & Jessie Polinsky Children's Center (PCC) along with his 2-year-old brother due to domestic violence that occurred in the home between their parents when Manny was 5 months old. Initially, both siblings were placed together in a home. However, Manny and his brother were removed again due to suspected abuse. Once Manny arrived at PCC, the staff quickly noticed he would refuse bottles and was losing weight.

Manny received a full developmental assessment at Rady Children's Hospital through the KidSTART program, a program for children under the age of 6 with developmental and mental health needs and/or at risk of losing their placement due to these needs. Manny was referred for multiple follow-up services due to the urgency of his delay in development. His feeding, visual and gross motor skills, and low muscle tone were also of concern. Manny was placed with a caregiver dedicated to helping him improve, consistently contacting the KidSTART Care Coordinator to ensure all necessary appointments were in place. The support Manny received between his caregiver and KidSTART was a key factor in his improvement.

As a result of the services Manny received, he graduated from occupational therapy, is eating well, and is meeting all his developmental milestones.



TOGETHER
WE CAN DO
SO MUCH.

You can help make a difference in the lives of San Diego's 3,000 current and former foster youth:

DONATE

Through your generosity, you can help a foster youth receive the necessary support and services for a brighter future. Your gift of any size will make a difference.

VOLUNTEER

Become a Guardian Scholar Mentor or a Camp Connect Counselor and provide the support and guidance to students aspiring to reach their educational and career goals, and reunite siblings living apart in foster care.

ATTEND

Our fundraiser, the Dream On Concert Gala, is held annually to benefit foster children. Enjoy an exclusive dinner and a private concert featuring a major recording artist.

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PROMISES2KIDS.ORG
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