



May, 2004
Los Angeles Foster Care Awareness Campaign

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For Immediate Release

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May, 2004 Los Angeles Foster Care Awareness Campaign Seeks to Build Community Support for Foster Children

*Activities Range from Celebration of Foster Care Success Stories, to
Education Summit, to Conference on Needs of Teen Parents in Foster Care*

(Los Angeles, CA) – Los Angeles is home to one of the country's largest child welfare systems, accounting for an astounding one in ten foster children nationwide. For the second year in a row, as part of the **May, 2004 Los Angeles Foster Care Awareness Campaign**, leaders from various advocacy, governmental, judicial, and public interest organizations have teamed up to bring public attention to the tremendous need for increased community support for the nearly 30,000 youth in the Los Angeles foster care system.

"Some children stay in foster care for only a few weeks or months while their parents get their lives back on track, but thousands of others cannot safely be returned home, and too many grow up within the foster care system. As communal 'parents' for these children, we need to provide foster youth with the stability, education, and nurturing that will help put them on the path to stable and productive adult lives," opined Miriam Aroni Krinsky, Executive Director of the Children's Law Center of Los Angeles.

A **press conference** at the Hall of Administration, room 864 at 9:00 AM on **Tuesday, May 11** will introduce several foster care "heroes" whose stories reflect significant contributions to the lives of foster children. Whether in working for systemic reform of preparations to "emancipate" youth from care at around age 18, advocating to make sure that foster children have the ability to go on to college, contributing ongoing financial assistance to youth in need, or providing a home for teens in foster care who become mothers themselves, the honorees being recognized have created positive change by their actions.

Also being honored are several former foster youth whose lives exemplify success over difficult odds. "These wonderful examples of achievement from within the foster care system demonstrate caring individuals who have worked to change the lives of youth in need, whether by undertaking social work as a profession in which they can make a difference, mentoring foster youth as they enter college, or serving as advocates for youth at risk," noted Dr. David Sanders, Director of the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services. "These heroes show the difference even one individual can make in leaving an indelible positive imprint on the life of a foster child," Krinsky added.

A list of key events associated with the May, 2004 Los Angeles Foster Care Awareness Campaign is attached.

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Highlights of Key Events

- **“Fostering the Bond: Dependent Teens and Their Babies” will open the Foster Care Awareness Campaign on Friday, May 7th at the Westside Children’s Center.** Featured speakers at this event will include California State Senator Sheila Kuehl, Los Angeles County Supervisor Yvonne Braithwaite Burke, Barry Zuckerman MD, Chief of Pediatrics at Boston Medical School, and Los Angeles Juvenile Court Presiding Judge Michael Nash.
- **On Tuesday, May 11, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors will honor “Foster Care Heroes” whose compelling personal stories illustrate outstanding success or achievement within the foster care system.** These heroes, chosen by a roundtable of child advocacy agencies, showcase the ability to overcome adversity and make a significant difference in the lives of the 30,000 foster children in Los Angeles County.
- **The Second Annual “Los Angeles Education Summit on the Needs and Challenges Facing Foster Youth: Identifying Obstacles and Forging Solutions” will be held on Friday, May 14th at St. Anne’s Maternity Home.** More than 100 Los Angeles leaders and decision-makers from the education, judicial, child welfare and advocacy community will build on last year’s summit and focus on the tremendous educational needs of children in foster care. Featured speakers at this event will include Congressman Adam Schiff, Los Angeles County Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, LAUSD School Board Member Julie Korenstein, Department of Children and Family Services Executive Director Dr. David Sanders, and Probation Chief Richard Shumsky.
- **“Does Foster Care care? A panel discussion about foster care as a healing process,” will be presented at pediatric Grand Rounds for Cedars-Sinai, UCLA, and King/Drew hospital staff.** The panel discussions include physicians, social workers, attorneys, and foster youth who have faced medical obstacles. In addition, lobby displays related to the health issues of foster youth will be placed in hospitals to enhance public awareness.
- **“Whose Children Are They?” Spiritual leaders throughout Los Angeles will engage their congregations in dialogue to understand how the faith-based community can better support the foster care system and more actively ‘parent’ the children in our care.** Sermons, bulletins, and newsletter features will focus on issues related to foster care.
- **Posters and flyers describing ways the community can “Change the Life of a Foster Child” will be distributed Countywide.** The posters provide information and phone numbers on how individuals can get involved, ranging from creating a permanent home, volunteering as a mentor, serving as a tutor or child advocate, to donating gift certificates so foster children are not overlooked on birthdays and holidays.
- **Tuesday, June 29th the Writers Guild of America, West and Children’s Law Center of Los Angeles will host a panel discussion for film and television writers** as part of their ongoing series with Hollywood, Health & Society at the USC Annenberg’s Norman Lear Center. The panel will provide information, resources, case examples, and first person accounts to stimulate potential storylines about the health and social problems that foster youth experience.

Contact: Miriam Aroni Krinsky
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May, 2004
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Foster Care Today Fact Sheet

WHO ARE FOSTER CHILDREN?

- Over half a million children nationwide live in foster care while their families work to overcome addiction to drugs or alcohol, illness, financial hardship, or other problems
- The number of foster youth in California has tripled in the last 20 years.
- With roughly 30,000 youth in foster care, Los Angeles is home to the largest foster care system in the country. Approximately one out of every ten children in foster care nationally is under the jurisdiction of the Los Angeles court system.
- About 25% of children entering foster care for the first time are infants, and 60% are under 4 years old. Adolescents between 13 and 18 make up approximately 33% of all children in foster care.
- The proportion of children of color in foster care is 3 times greater than the proportion represented in the overall US population.
- Most children stay in foster care only temporarily and are reunited with their families, but about a third remain in care for 2 years or longer. Almost 20% will become legally free for adoption.¹

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE THAT WE COLLECTIVELY UNDERTAKE TO "PARENT"?

- **Be a foster parent.** Specialized training, support, and assistance are available to enable you to give foster children a warm and safe home environment.
- **Adopt a child from foster care.** The need for a permanent, secure home and a family they can trust is great among children in the foster care system.
- **Be a CASA.** Specially trained volunteers serve as Court Appointed Special Advocates to work for the benefit of the child both inside and outside the courtroom.
- **Be a mentor.** Partner with youth who are about to turn 18 to help them learn the basics of living independently.
- **Donate or volunteer** your time to organizations that serve foster children. Call Info Line to learn about the many opportunities to make a difference.
- **Support public measures** that improve services to foster children and their families.

"All kids need is a little help, a little hope and somebody who believes in them."

--Earvin "Magic" Johnson

For more information on how to get involved, call Info Line at (800) 339-6993.

¹The AFCARS Report. (2000). US Dept. of Health and Human Services.

Media Advisory

April 26, 2004

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LOS ANGELES CHILD ADVOCATES SEEK TO ASSIST DEPENDENT TEENS AND THEIR BABIES

*First-ever convening aims to break the cycle of foster care and strengthen
the parenting ability of dependent adolescent mothers*

- WHAT:** **Fostering the Bond: Dependent Teens and Their Babies**, a groundbreaking Los Angeles summit to be held in conjunction with the May Los Angeles Foster Care Awareness Campaign, will bring together child advocates, policy makers, service providers, and funders to work together on innovative, system-changing approaches to creating healthy, stable families for foster and recently emancipated teens with young children.
- WHY:** California's rate of teen pregnancy is 21% higher than the national average, ranking it among the worst in the nation. According to the Los Angeles Children's Planning Council, there were over 6,000 teen births in Los Angeles County in the year 2000. One recent study of adolescents age 17 years and older in foster care found that 32% of the young women studied were pregnant or parenting.
- WHO:** Featured Speakers include: **California State Senator Sheila Kuehl**
Los Angeles County Supervisor Yvonne Braithwaite Burke
Barry Zuckerman MD, Chief of Pediatrics, Boston Medical School and the Boston University School of Medicine
Los Angeles Juvenile Court Presiding Judge Michael Nash
Department of Children and Family Services Director Dr. David Sanders
- WHEN:** Friday, May 7, 2004
9:00 AM to 4:00 PM
- WHERE:** Westside Children's Center
12120 Wagner Street
Culver City, CA
- SPONSORS:** Children's Law Center of Los Angeles
Westside Children's Center
The California Endowment

Media Advisory

May 3, 2004

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LOS ANGELES EDUCATION SUMMIT TO FOCUS ON CHALLENGES FACING FOSTER YOUTH:

*Second gathering seeks to develop strategies to close the
education achievement gap for children in foster care.*

WHAT: “The Los Angeles Education Summit on the Needs and Challenges Facing Foster Youth: Identifying Obstacles and Forging Solutions” will be held in conjunction with the May, 2004 Foster Care Awareness Campaign. More than 100 Los Angeles leaders and decision-makers from the education, judicial, child welfare and advocacy community will build on last year’s summit and seek to develop new approaches to address the tremendous educational challenges of foster youth.

WHY: About three quarters of children in foster care currently perform below grade level, and nearly half have been held back in school. 46% of foster youth fail to complete high school, compared with 16% of non-foster youth. Once they leave the foster care system, typically around age 18, more than half of foster youth are unemployed, almost a third will become homeless, and one in five will be incarcerated within two years.

WHO: Featured Speakers include: **Congressman Adam Schiff**
Los Angeles County Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich
Los Angeles Unified School District Board Member Julie Korenstein
Department of Children and Family Services Director Dr. David Sanders
Probation Chief Richard Shumsky
Los Angeles Juvenile Court Presiding Judge Michael Nash

WHEN: Friday, May 14, 2004
Breakfast and Registration begin at 8:00 AM

WHERE: St. Anne’s Maternity Home
155 N. Occidental Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90026



Children's Law Center of Los Angeles

Miriam Aroni Krinsky
Executive Director

"BIRTHDAY PROJECT"

WORKING TOGETHER TO ENSURE THAT NO CHILD'S BIRTHDAY IS LEFT BEHIND

All too often foster children move from home to home, school to school, and family to caregiver to foster home. In the wake of these ongoing disruptions and a childhood in motion, something as basic as a birthday can easily fall through the cracks of an overburdened foster care system and go unnoticed. While it is inconceivable for most children to imagine a birthday without celebration, cards, and presents, this occurrence is the norm for a significant number of foster children.

In an effort to make every foster child's birthday a joyous occasion and a day worth remembering, the Children's Law Center recently launched a "Birthday Project." With the support of the private sector and other organizations, this initiative will enable our community to acknowledge the birthdays of an often neglected and forgotten population of children.

Thanks to the assistance of, and generous donations from, the Los Angeles County Bar Association, In-N-Out Burgers, and numerous other private donors, Children's Law Center has assembled a wonderful collection of toys, books, cosmetics and gift certificates that will be given to foster children who otherwise receive nothing on their special day. The gifts to be distributed cover a wide-range of age groups; foster children ranging in age from toddler to young adults will be able to celebrate a birthday properly thanks to our community's support of this heartfelt program. Children will receive an age-appropriate gift along with a card signed by their attorney when they come to court or are visited in a foster home or group home placement during the week of their birthday.

If you, your company, or any other entity you are aware of would like to learn more about this important program, please contact the Children's Law Center at (323) 980-1700. Together, we can ensure that *every* foster child experiences a birthday as a moment of happiness rather than despair and that no child's birthday is left behind.



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Eight "Heroes" and Success Stories

Former Foster Youth Becomes Social Worker

Jessica Ambroz



Twenty years ago, Jessica Ambroz was bouncing from homeless shelter to homeless shelter, living on the streets with a mentally ill mother. She was eventually taken into the child welfare system and placed in a series of foster homes. Despite this chaos, Jessica always managed to do well in school. She earned a BA in Child Psychology and a minor in Spanish, which she speaks fluently. She completed her Master's degree from USC in May and is now pursuing her LCSW. Jessica specializes in Voluntary Family Maintenance. She has a typically high caseload of 26, but takes the time to nurture every child and family. She takes an extra interest in all her families, accompanying children to school, providing needed beds, or even getting bus passes, if necessary. In March, Jessica ran the Los Angeles Marathon and raised money for the DCFS Children's Trust Fund. She dedicated each mile to the families she works with. Jessica continues to be an inspiration and mentor by speaking to former foster youth and telling them they *can* succeed. "Foster kids need to see foster kids being successful," she says.

Galvanizing an 'Army' to Work for Foster Youth

Patricia Curry



Patricia Curry is a tireless advocate who exemplifies the ability of a single person to shape the entire Los Angeles foster care system in a very positive way. Trisha currently serves on the L.A. County Commission for Children and Families, which she chaired for two years, and is a member of the Emancipation Program Partnership, where she focuses on the Department of Children and Family Service's redesign of emancipation services. For more than a decade, Trish has dedicated herself to making sure the needs of former foster youth are not forgotten as they turn 18 and leave the system. She chaired the Emancipation Committee for 12 years and, during that time, advocated for a Web site, transition centers, transitional housing for emancipating youth including housing for youth with mental health problems, jobs, emancipation services for probation youth, and integration of county service to assist emancipating youth. Trish has worked consistently to ensure that youth leaving foster care have a support system to rely on. She has, in fact, inspired so many other people to become advocates for foster youth that they are often referred to as "soldiers in Trish's army."

From Social Worker to Valued Friend

Robert Hirschhorn



Social Worker Robert Hirschhorn brings a special passion for families to his job. He specializes in Family Group Decision-Making emancipation conferences, which support youth in achieving their goals as they get ready to leave the foster care system. He created an emancipation protocol to establish short-term goals for youth and then expanded the concept to include future life plans. For the past ten years, Rob has been successful in reunifying many children with their parents, providing "safety plans" for children so they are not hurt in care, and coming up with creative visitation plans. Rob advises other social workers to, "Stay hopeful, and realize that you do make a big difference in the lives of our children." Rob's own success is measured by the youth he served, such as a young girl Rob began to work with when she was 15 years old. Although she had been severely abused, the youth believes Rob's nurturing character helped her regain her trust in men and flourish as a successful young adult. Now reunited with her mother and serving as a nursing home volunteer, the young woman says, "Somebody took the time to listen and help me. Now it's my turn." Many of the youth Rob helped over the years continue to stay in contact with him and depend on this devoted social worker as a mentor and friend.

Tough Beginnings to Extraordinary Success

Rashad McAllister



Rashad McAllister, who overcame tough beginnings in an environment where violence and abuse were the norm, didn't let the odds deter him from a dogged pursuit of his goals. Rashad graduated from high school and joined the Job Corps, a federal program that not only teaches youth a trade but also provides them with a place to live. After developing his employment skills, Rashad continued to work hard as a security guard to support himself while pursuing his dream of a career in nursing. He often worked long shifts -- 12 hours a day, seven days a week. Through the DCFS Independent Living Program, Rashad obtained government grants to attend nursing school and spent hours in the public library studying and using the library's computers. He even took his materials along to work, so he could study during his breaks. This past February, Rashad's determination and perseverance paid off, and he graduated from Casa Loma College as a Nurse's Aide. Rashad has earned his success through hard work and focus. The next step for Rashad? He hopes to find a way to return to school and become a Registered Nurse.

Mentoring Other Foster Youth

Juliza Perez



When most youth leave the foster care system at around 18 years of age, they have no permanent support system or adult to turn to for guidance. Former foster youth Juliza Perez, a Phi Beta Kappa student in Mass Communications and Sociology at UC Berkeley, is determined to change that. Her dedication to helping others transition from the foster care system into independent adult living has become a passion she takes far beyond the classroom. Juliza worked as a Peer Counselor for the Community College Foundation's Independent Living Program. For the past three years, she has also served as a motivational speaker and mentor for freshman foster youth preparing for college. She is a founding member of The Community College Foundation and DCFS "Mentoring Collaborative" which develops and implements resources to create "Campus Peer Mentoring Programs" at community colleges. Juliza demonstrates not only her own success, but also a determination to bring that success within the reach of other foster youth. Juliza reports, "My success has depended and continues to rely on individuals and organizations that supported me when I felt like quitting, encouraged me when I was down, and pushed me to greater heights. These individuals and organizations are not strangers. They have become my extended family. They are the rock I lean on."

A Role Model for Foster Teens and their Babies

Elvira Rodriguez



For 30 years, Elvira Rodriguez has provided foster care for 6 adolescent girls at a time. Many of these teens are mothers themselves, and Elvira is determined not to perpetuate the cycle of abuse and neglect. With a positive parenting example that foster youth too often lack, Elvira has become a role model for teens and their babies, giving foster youth who are also moms faith in their ability to parent and encouragement to participate in school, therapy, visits with siblings, and school activities. Elvira emphasizes the importance of getting an education. While fewer than half of foster youth overall complete high school, Elvira makes sure that almost all her girls graduate. A former foster child said, "I have never been able to pay her back for all the wonderful things she did for me, but I hope you can make her feel like a star at least for one day."

90-Year-Old Puts Kids First

Aaron Ruben



At the age of 90, Aaron Ruben exemplifies how one person's involvement can make a difference in the lives of many foster children. He has been a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) for more than 16 years. A former writer for the Sid Caesar comedy show in the 1950's and producer of several other hit TV comedy series, Aaron set up an improvisational comedy camp for foster youth at MacLaren Children's Center a number of years ago. But this was not enough for Aaron. He wanted to be even more instrumental in helping individual children. His very first case after training to be a CASA illustrates his wholehearted devotion to foster youth. A 17-year-old girl was preparing to leave the foster care system, but had no life plan. Aaron advocated for the services and funding she needed to go to college. She eventually graduated from UC Santa Cruz and went on to earn her Masters Degree in Counseling Psychology. She now works with the very population of at risk children she was once a part of herself. As a result of this experience, Aaron implemented a scholarship fund for foster children who want to go to college. Through that scholarship, youth who otherwise might have no future see the doors of college opened for them. Almost two decades later, Aaron has no plans to slow down and continues to advocate for the best interest of children.

Generosity Epitomizes Success of Community Partnership

The Woodland Hills Rotary Club



Recognizing that the whole community takes responsibility for raising children in foster care, members of the Woodland Hills Rotary Club have given outstanding support to foster children in the San Fernando, Santa Clarita and San Gabriel Valleys. For more than 14 years, the Woodland Hills Rotarians have provided scholarships for foster youth, sponsored foster teen events, contributed food baskets for foster families at Thanksgiving and Christmas, and participated in holiday parties at group homes. In typical fashion, the Rotarians stepped up recently to provide an expensive special helmet that Medi-Cal would not cover for an infant born with a misshapen head who had been adopted from foster care. They also contributed funds to a foster family who lost everything in last fall's wildfires. The overwhelming generosity of the Woodland Hills Rotary Club epitomizes what can happen when the community works in partnership to support our most vulnerable children.

####

Change *the Life of a* Foster **Child**

Six Things You Can Do

Adopt a Child Provide a permanent loving home to a foster child through adoption. You do not have to be wealthy or married; single people, un-married couples, and partners can adopt. Financial and medical assistance is available to adoptive families. For more information, please contact the County of Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services Adoption Hotline at (888) 811-1121 or <http://dcfs.co.la.ca.us>

Be a Foster Parent Foster parents are needed to provide foster children, who cannot live with their families, a warm and safe home environment. Specialized training, support and financial assistance is available for foster parents. For more information on becoming a foster parent, call the DCFS Foster Parent Recruitment Hotline at (888) 811-1121 or <http://dcfs.co.la.ca.us>

Be a CASA A Court Appointed Special Advocate is a volunteer from the community who is recruited, trained and supervised by the Child Advocates Office. CASA volunteers visit their assigned foster child once a month and advocate for the best interests of the child both inside and outside the courtroom. Call the Child Advocate's Office for information on how to become a CASA volunteer (323) 526-6666 or visit our website at www.home.earthlink.net/~casala

Be a Mentor The Bridges to the Future mentoring program is a unique partnership of the Los Angeles County Bar Association, the Department of Children & Family Services and Probation. This mentoring program recruits and trains volunteers to mentor youth who are about to turn 18 and emancipate from foster care or probation. These successful professionals are paired with youth who have no permanent family and who are facing life on their own for the first time. For more information contact Connie Rex at (626) 858-1572.

Be a Tutor/Donor While the foster care system does its best to provide children with the most basic necessities of life, foster children often lack the things that many children take for granted such as computers, bicycles, school supplies or even help with homework. With a donation of something as simple as your time you could help a child learn to read. Business owners and private individuals can donate the type of personal items, large or small, that so many of these children lack. If you would like to help in any of these ways, please contact Children's Law Center of Los Angeles at (323) 980-1700.

Celebrate a Foster Child's Birthday The average foster child experiences 3 to 4 moves during the course of their stay in the foster care system. Many times something as simple as a child's birthday is lost in the shuffle. Please help remember a foster child's birthday by donating an unwrapped gift for children ranging in age from newborn to 18 years. For more information on how you can celebrate a birthday, please contact Children's Law Center at (323) 980-1700.

Sponsored by:



Department of Children
and Family Services



The Alliance for Children's Rights



Children's Law Center
of Los Angeles



May, 2004

Los Angeles Foster Care Awareness Campaign

Sponsoring Organizations



The Alliance for Children's Rights
promoting the future of all children

The Alliance for Children's Rights - - The Alliance for Children's Rights is a free legal services organization focused solely on protecting the rights of impoverished, abused and neglected children in Los Angeles County – children in foster care, children with educational disabilities, children who need healthcare or public benefits, and children in need of legal guardianship or adoption. Since its founding in 1992, The Alliance has helped more than 35,000 children get the support and services to which they are entitled.



The Association of Community Human Service Agencies -- ACHSA, whose beginnings date back to 1955, today represents more than 70 nonprofit community agencies that provide a wide range of child welfare, mental health, and juvenile justice services for vulnerable individuals and families in Los Angeles County. ACHSA is committed to building healthy individuals, families, and communities through advocacy in pursuit of more effective service delivery systems within Los Angeles County.



**Children's Law Center
of Los Angeles**

Children's Law Center - - Children's Law Center of Los Angeles, formerly Dependency Court Legal Services, Inc., is a nonprofit, public interest law corporation created over a decade ago and funded by the Los Angeles Superior Court to serve as appointed counsel for the County's abused and neglected youth. With a dedicated and passionate 180 person staff of lawyers, paralegals and investigator/social workers, Children's Law Center serves as the "voice" in the foster care system for over 20,000 children under the jurisdiction of the dependency court.



Comfort for Court Kids, Inc.
The teddy bear is a symbol of comfort and love.

Comfort for Court Kids, Inc. - - Comfort for Court Kids, Inc. is a nonprofit corporation that provides brand new teddy bears for children who attend Dependency Court hearings. Since 1991, over 362,000 bears have been distributed. CCK bears are provided for "Adoption Saturday" in Los Angeles County as well as for National Adoption Day. Fostering Comfort is a popular new program that provides funds for special items for children in foster care.



Court Appointed Special Advocates - - A CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) is a specially trained volunteer, appointed by a judge to gather information about the circumstances of specific children in foster care. A CASA submits written reports and makes recommendations to the court, and advocates in court and in the community in the best interests of the child. CASA of Los Angeles recruits, trains and supervises CASA volunteers in adherence with national standards, state law, and state and local rules of court.



Dependency Court Judiciary - - The Dependency Court, a division of the Superior Court of Los Angeles County located in Monterey Park, has approximately 32,000 abused and neglected children under its jurisdiction. Twenty dedicated bench officers serve these children.



Legal Advocates for Permanent Parenting – Legal Advocates for Permanent Parenting is a non-profit organization founded by attorneys, law professors, law students, and others with both professional and personal life experience in foster care and adoption. LAPP provides self-help legal and procedural information and training to foster parents, relative caregivers, and pre-adoptive families of children in care, and works to improve communication between foster parents, legal professionals, social workers and the courts.



The Los Angeles Affiliate of the National Association of Counsel for Children - - The Los Angeles Affiliate of the National Association of Counsel for Children is a non-profit organization dedicated to bettering the lives of children in foster care through educating children on their rights, training children's attorneys, and sponsoring legislation.



Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors - - The Board of Supervisors is the governing body for Los Angeles County, one of the nation's largest counties with 4,084 square miles and a population of 9,902,700 million. The County provides child welfare services for its residents, along with law enforcement, public health protection, public social services, parks and recreation, and diversified cultural activities.



The Los Angeles County Commission for Children and Families -- The Los Angeles County Commission for Children and Families was created in 1984 to advise the Board of Supervisors on child welfare issues and provide oversight to the Department of Children and Family Services. The Commission for Children and Families is made up 15 Board appointed volunteers to advocate on behalf of all the children under the County's supervision.



The Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services - - The Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services, with community partners, provides a comprehensive child protection system of prevention, preservation and permanency to ensure that children grow up safe, physically and emotionally healthy, educated and in permanent homes.



Public Counsel Law Center - - Public Counsel is the largest pro bono law office in the nation, serving low-income children, adults, and families. Through its Children's Rights Project, Public Counsel assists children in civil legal matters such as guardianship, adoption, special education, government benefits, emancipation, teen parenting issues, immigration, mental health services, access to education and transitional services upon emancipation from foster care.