



# PRESCHOOL TO GRADUATE SCHOOL: SUPPORTING EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS IN FOSTER YOUTH

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# San Diego County Schools

481,102  
Students  
(2020-21)

43  
Districts, including  
SDCOE Juvenile Court  
and Community Schools

449  
Elementary Schools

100  
Middle Schools

110  
High Schools

Hundreds more charter  
and private schools



# Problem

Half of the students in SD County live in households that earn \$35,000 or less for a family of 4.

The policy infrastructure in the US has produced unequal distribution of resources that has led to housing/food insecurity and limited access to health care.

There are children and families in our communities that are not thriving.

# Belongingness

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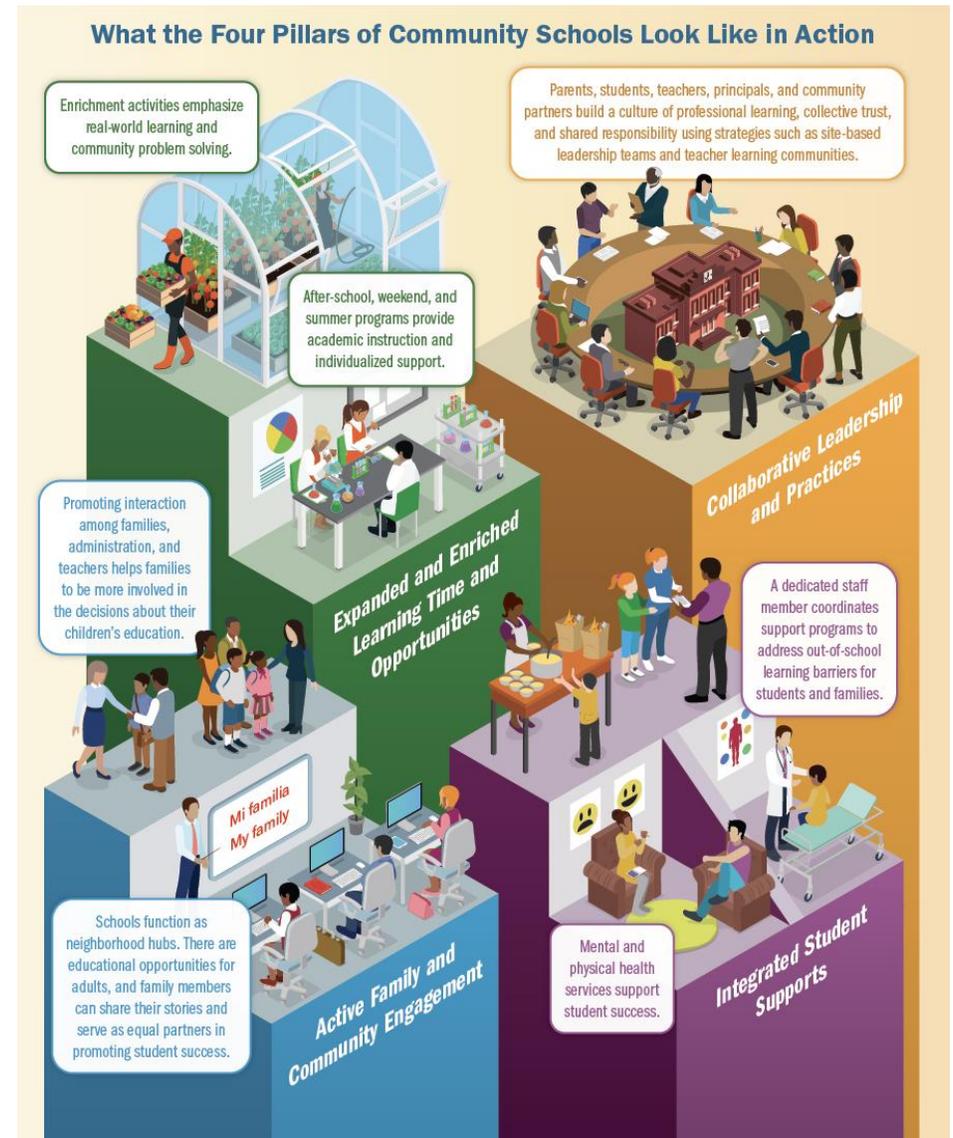
- One's well-being is considered
- Having a meaningful voice
- Having the opportunity to participate in the design of social and cultural structures
- Groups have collective power and share a linked fate.

—john a. powell



# Community Schools

- A unique opportunity exists by re-imagining the school as the central hub for community transformation that could lead to new learning by building upon existing assets and creating new opportunities for every family unit and child.



# Our Collective Power

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Shared belief that we can meet the needs of each child so they get what they need to thrive

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Sharing ideas, insights and taking action will continue to change outcomes for Foster Youth

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Willingness to collaborate and braid funding resources with partners throughout the county





## PROGRAM BACKGROUND

- Based on Gloria Molina Foster Youth Education Program
- Began as a partnership between County of San Diego Child Welfare Services, San Diego County Office of Education and Sweetwater Union High School District.
- July 2022 expanded to Escondido Union and Escondido Union High.
- Address the educational needs of youth receiving child welfare services, enrolled at middle and high schools in districts with signed MOA's.
- Dedicated FASE Educational Social Worker to help with academic success by providing wraparound educational support to our youth, their families and our local school district
- Educational assessment and case planning tools, as well as Core team meetings, to link youth to academic and extracurricular resources

## EDUCATIONAL SOCIAL WORKER ROLE

- Provide comprehensive educational case management
- Seek input regarding the youth's education goals/needs/strengths
- Connect youth to academic support services
- Develop Education Case Plan, that includes actions needed to address educational concerns and goals, and individualized an educational roadmap
- Facilitate monthly Core meetings with all parties and supportive adults to review initial assessment and monitor of progress

# OUTCOMES



## FIRST COHORT

- 85% of the students improved their GPA
- 35% of the students increased their GPA to 4.0
- All seniors graduated
- 95% of the seniors graduated with 4.0
- 95% college enrollment
- 95% of youth had no placement changes during the academic year, helping to stabilize placement and education success

## SECOND COHORT

- 74% of the students improved their GPA
- Two students qualified for an IEP due to educational social worker advocating for them to be assessed by school psychologist
- One senior increased her GPA from 3.18 to a 4.0
- 84% of youth had no placement changes during the academic year, helping to stabilize placement and education success



## What is one thing that went especially well in FASE?

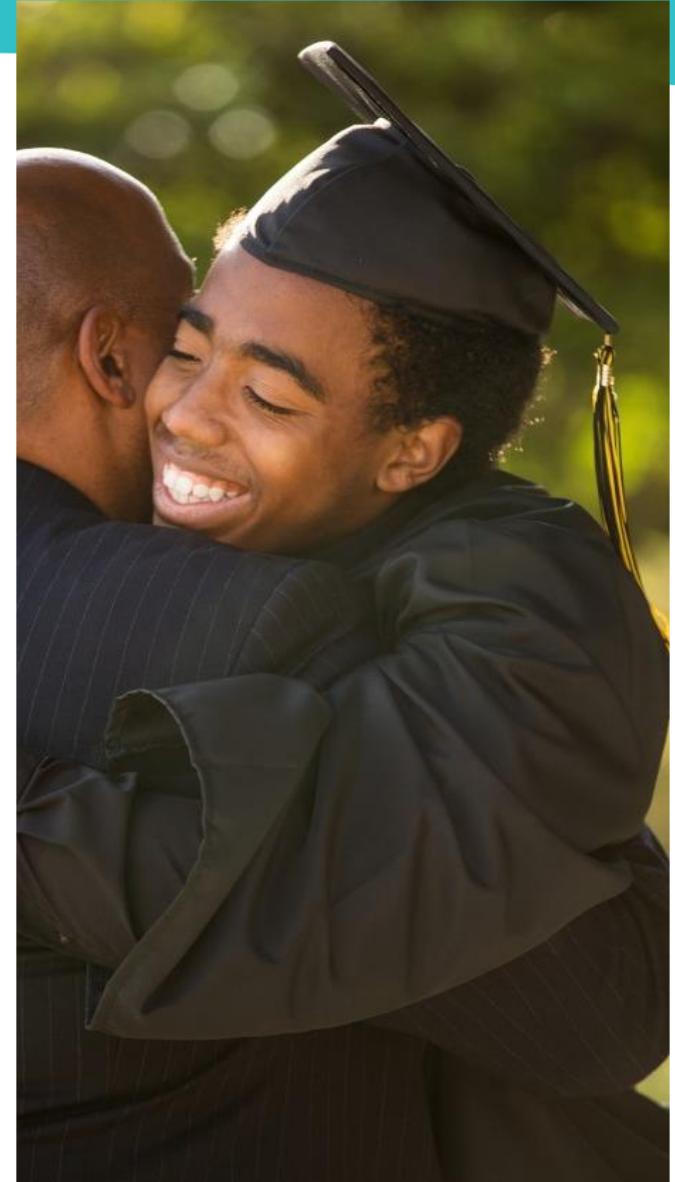
- “The FASE social worker got me a tutor, helped me make goals and get good grades.”
- “I was able to express my emotions.”
- “When I got suspended, the social worker talked to my caregiver and principal so I could go back to school.”



# EXPANSION OF FASE



- Hired additional educational social workers to further expand in the Sweetwater District, Escondido Union and Escondido Union High.
- Initial meetings have taken place with San Diego Unified, San Marcos Unified, and Grossmont Unified.
- Continue to collaborate with Promises2Kids, San Diego County Office of Education, and Career Pathways to streamline and offer resources and services to youth.





## Mission

Promises2Kids' mission is to *create a brighter future for foster children*®. From the moment they come into foster care and through to adulthood, Promises2Kids provides the hope, support, and opportunities these individuals need to change their lives for the better... now and for years to come.





# Programs

## **A.B. and Jessie Polinsky Children's Center**

An emergency shelter for children who are removed from their homes due to abuse and neglect; this facility protects and cares for more than 1,000 children each year.

## **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.

## **Camp Connect**

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

## **Guardian Scholars**

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

# The Promises2Kids and San Diego Difference



## Foster Youth Statistics

- 48% of foster youth complete high school (Compared to 82% of the gen pop)
- 10% of foster youth who complete high school will attend college and persist for 1 year
- Of the 10% that begin higher education, only 3-8% will graduate
- 33% will be homeless after leaving the system
- 47% of foster youth reported they were unemployed after leaving the system

## Promises Statistics

- 95% completed high school during Junior Guardian Scholars
- 85% of program participants complete their post secondary goals
- 71% have stable housing for a min. of 1 year and 35% have no rent subsidies
- 72% are employed and 40% with benefits

## Averages

**100**  
students

↓

**48**  
will graduate from  
high school

↓

**4**  
will attend college

↓

**1**  
will earn a college  
degree

## Promises

**100**  
students

↓

**90**  
will graduate from  
high school

↓

**72**  
will attend college

↓

**61**  
will earn a college  
degree

# Collaboration



- San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA)
  - FASE Social Workers
  - Youth2Youth Peer Mentoring
- San Diego County Office of Education
- San Diego State University
- Statewide Guardian Scholars and like programs
  - San Diego Community College District
- The list goes on and on!
- **Stories...**

A photograph of a large, white, Art Deco-style building at San Diego State University. The building features a prominent central tower with a red-tiled dome and arched windows. To the left, there is a large archway with the inscription "CONRAD PREBYS AZTEC STUDENT UNION". The building has multiple stories with green-framed windows and doors. In the foreground, a paved plaza is visible with a few people walking. The sky is a clear, light blue.

# SDSU

Student Affairs  
and Campus  
Diversity

**San Diego State University  
Guardian Scholars Program**

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# History

SDSU

Guardian  
Scholars

The SDSU Guardian Scholars Program was established in 2007 with the Alex Smith Foundation and served 14 students in holistic, wrap-around services under the support of the Office of Educational Opportunity Programs within Student Affairs.

## 2007-2016

- The Alex Smith Foundation transition out and New Program Supporters (Donors) came in
- Assistant Director was identified to oversee the program
- Students increased from 14 to 99 in 2015 (incoming class 32)
- Add staff roles such as the GS Program Assistant and Graduate Assistant
- The philosophy of service changed
- GS Student Advisory Board (GSSAB) was created

## 2016-Present Day

- Added staff role of Program Coordinator
- New Program Supporters (Donors) - Price Philanthropies, Peter Seidler, Jim Sinegal, Day of Giving Donors, Aztec Angels Parent Group, and SDSU URAD support
- Wellness Coaches and EOPOS Counselor were added to GS team to support students' success
- Implementation of the GS Housing Award - \$1 million allocation
- 8 Pillars of GS Service developed



# Support Services

SDSU

Guardian  
Scholars

- Scholarships
- Year-round housing (on or off campus living)
- Priority registration
- Academic, Social and Career Counseling
- Wellness Coaching - Counseling and Psychological Services
- Guardian Scholars Resource Area
- On-site counselor from the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships
- Staff support to on-campus and local resources
- General seminar for incoming & graduating students
- Monthly meetings for entire GS community
- Social events and activities after hours (i.e. game nights)
- Annual Thanksgiving and Graduation Programs
- Tutoring and Mentoring services
- Summer Transitional Programs
- Support from Career Services and Education Abroad
- CalFresh assistance
- Computer lab w/ 1/2 off printing
- Academic and Learning Support Workshops & Study Area (LSC)



# GS Partners

**SDSU**

Guardian  
Scholars

## Community Partners:

- San Diego Housing Commission / HUD
- Just in Time
- Promises2Kids
- South Bay Community Services
- U.S. Housing & Urban Development
- Becky Moores
- Aztec Angels Parent Group
- Together We Rise
- High School/Community College Foster Youth Programs

## San Diego State University Partners:

- Research Foundation
- Campanile Foundation
- University Relations & Development
- Enrollment Services
- Office of Housing Administration
- Residential Education
- Office of Financial Aid & Scholarships
- Student Account Services
- Economic Crisis and Response Team
- Fowler College of Business Administration

# HUD/Housing Overview

SDSU

Guardian  
Scholars

In 2015, a new collaboration between SDSU and the San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC) was established to help close the funding gap for housing for students admitted into the SDSU Guardian Scholars program.

SDHC utilizes the “*Moving to Work*” (MTW) federal funding from Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to help fund the housing component of the SDSU Guardian Scholars Program. Originally started with 3 year commitment; now on year 7.

- HUD provides \$600k and SDSU matches with \$400k from philanthropic funding
- GS Students receive a postponement on their housing deposit
- GS Students can sign 9 month or 11.5 month housing lease (covers summer/breaks)
- Off-Campus qualified housing accommodations receive a \$652 stipend for rent paid to landlords directly; cannot be participating in other subsidized housing programs

HUD fills the gap to reduce loan borrowing with the goal to graduate students with less than \$10,000 in overall loan debt.





# QUESTIONS?

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