

News From Advokids

January 2009

Advocacy  Accountability  Action

Senator Dianne Feinstein Saves the Day!!

Compassionate Reassignment for Foster Dad.

Advokids enlisted the aid of Senator Dianne Feinstein to secure a permanent home for three San Francisco sisters in foster care. The girls, ages, 5, 3 and 18 months had an opportunity for a "forever home" in Texas with their maternal aunt and uncle. The placement process was fraught with bureaucratic delays. Advokids turned to its Board Member, Trish Black, Esq., who agreed to represent the Texas relatives pro bono and expedited a placement order from the juvenile court. However, by the time the girls were finally scheduled to move, their uncle, a sergeant in the U.S. Army, was scheduled to deploy to Afghanistan.

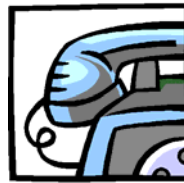
The aunt and uncle were both concerned about the girls' transition. They had already suffered tremendous losses and trauma in their short lives and their aunt and uncle wanted to establish a trusting foundation with the girls before he was deployed.

At Advokids' request, Senator Feinstein advocated for the girls' emotional stability and security. Her office contacted the Army and sought a "compassionate reassignment" for their uncle. The Army agreed to the request. It allowed the uncle to remain in Texas until the girls were settled in their new family.

The girls are now doing well. After spending the summer helping the girls settle into their new home, the uncle deployed to Afghanistan in September.

Advokids extends its appreciation to Senator Feinstein for her assistance to this family and for her extraordinary efforts and advocacy on behalf of these foster children.

Advokids' Telephone Hotline ...one child at a time



Debbie, a foster mom in Southern California called Advokids deeply concerned about Nate, a 5-year-old boy she had been caring for almost 6 months. Debbie was Nate's third foster placement in 12 months.

He had medical needs and special education needs that were finally being addressed in Debbie's care and he was thriving in his new home.

Debbie contacted Advokids after Nate's social worker informed her that Nate was going to be moved immediately to his father's ex-wife's house. Debbie wanted to know how to make sure that the move was in Nate's best interests, allowing for a gradual transition for him to stay with her at least until he could attend the big birthday party they had planned for him.

Advokids educated Debbie about administrative and judicial remedies to prevent the abrupt placement changes and how she could bring the case to the attention of the juvenile court. Debbie let the judge know all about Nate, his needs, and his past and present circumstances. The judge appreciated the information and applauded Debbie for her commitment to Nate.

Nate did not move to dad's ex-wife's home. He celebrated his birthday in grand style with Debbie. Several weeks later Nate was returned to his father's care.

Real Children, Real Futures

A Bay Area foster mom called the Advokids' Hotline concerned about 9-month-old baby Andrew and his visitation arrangements. Baby Andrew was required to spend his nights in three different homes each week. Foster mom holds a degree in child development and saw that the baby was becoming increasingly non-responsive and was failing to meet critical developmental milestones.

Advokids showed this foster mom how to access the juvenile court to report her concerns and seek a better visitation arrangement for the baby. Armed with child development research and references, she educated the juvenile court about every infant's need for consistent relationships and consistency in caregiving and daily routines, such as sleeping and feeding. The court was most grateful for the information and adjusted Andrew's visitation schedule to better meet his emotional needs.

Hotline Caller Quotes...

"My foster son has been the greatest gift in my life-- but this process has made me feel more powerless than anything I have been through. Getting the information and legal backing to support my gut feeling that my foster baby's bonding and permanency should be paramount was so reassuring. I also appreciated how Advokids made filing all the court papers so clear and easy."

"Advokids told us about www.zerotothree.org where we found the research to prove our case and show the court that moving an infant from a foster parent with whom he has bonded could be harmful."

"I was extremely impressed with the hotline, the thorough advice and follow through!"

"Advokids' hotline and website are very good resources."



SAVE THE DATE!
MARCH 7, 2009

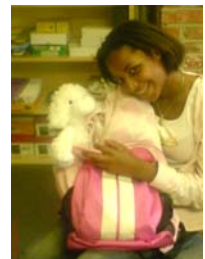
Honorary Committee:

*Senator Dianne Feinstein
Michael Pritchard
Robin Williams*

*Aces High for Advokids
2nd Annual Casino Night
Fundraiser*

Advokids in the Community

Alex Anton, an eighth grader at the Star Academy in San Anselmo, California, organized a school-wide volunteer project last Spring. The students put together backpacks for children entering emergency foster care in



Marin County. Alex educated her entire school community about the pain of entering foster care with nothing to call your own and solicited donations from her schoolmates to provide the backpacks and their contents. Serving as an "ambassador" to the **ADV ♥ KIDS Back Pack Project**, Alex delivered gorgeous backpacks filled with the essentials every child needs when removed from his or her home.

In partnership with Marin Advocates For Children and West Core Property Sausalito, the **Advokids Christmas Giving Tree Project** provided holiday gifts to foster children in Marin County.

Advokids Programs

Educational Website

Telephone Hotline

Legal Seminars *Attorneys, State Bar Accredited

*CASA Volunteers *Foster Parents *Multi-disciplinary Permanency Training for social workers, attorneys & mental health providers.

Enrichment Fund *Provides for the unmet needs of children in foster care.

Advokids,
5643 Paradise Dr., Suite 12B,
Corte Madera, CA 94925
415.924.0587, 877.ADV4KID
mcoyne@advokids.org
www.advokids.org
Tax I.D # 94-315721