

# News From Advokids

May 2009

Advocacy  Accountability  Action

May is National Foster Care Month... You Can Change a Lifetime!

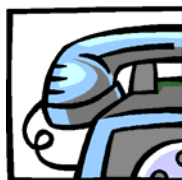
## Real Children, Real Futures

Jonathan was born in jail where his mom was serving time on drug charges. Shortly after his birth, the child welfare agency placed him in the care of his grandparents. At thirteen months of age, he was returned to his mother's care in a drug rehabilitation facility. Jonathan's grandmother, Debra, had many concerns about his emotional health. She knew that he was suffering from the loss of his close relationship with his grandparents and Debra was also concerned that her daughter was not yet capable of caring for Jonathan. For months, Debra fought for visitation with Jonathan and regular drug testing for her daughter, as she strongly suspected that her daughter was actively using drugs. She often felt like a lone voice advocating for Jonathan's emotional health and physical safety. After more than six difficult months, Jonathan's mom was arrested in a drug bust and Jonathan once again entered the foster care system. He was immediately placed back with his grandparents, but it would take years of Debra's continued advocacy before the courts freed Jonathan for adoption by his grandparents.

Advokids taught Debra how to access the Juvenile Court, how to fight for the right to visit Jonathan in the rehab facility, and how to request "de facto" parent status in order to advocate for Jonathan at every step of the legal proceedings. Debra's recent e-mail says it all...

*"I am happy to announce that with Advokids help, knowledge and legal referral, we successfully adopted our grandson on 1/9/2009. It was a 3 year legal battle. Advokids helped us with legal referrals and the lawyer we hired was awesome. Several ups and downs, but Advokids listened and helped with information regarding California laws regarding foster care and adoption rights of grandparents. I am very grateful and cannot recommend them enough. Bless their work."*

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



**Siblings...A Critical Connection.** Advokids' hotline is the only free telephone hotline in California for foster child advocates. Often our hotline receives calls from young adults who have siblings in the foster

care system. Advokids provides information and court forms to callers to enable them advocate on behalf of their siblings in foster care, request visitation with their siblings, and, in some cases, ask the court to place siblings in their care.

Shana, a Bay Area college student, called the Advokids telephone hotline seeking information about how to request custody of her four young siblings who were struggling in foster care. Advokids explained the legal process to Shana, and enlisted the help of Robbi Cook, a local juvenile law attorney, who generously agreed to help Shana petition the court and advocate for her siblings.

**Grandfather and foster parent working together...** Cheryl, a Southern California foster parent was caring for 18 month old Joseph, hoping to adopt if Joseph was not able to return home. The baby's grandfather lived nearby and visited his grandson in Cheryl's home frequently, grateful and pleased with the loving home Cheryl was providing. When Cheryl received the news that Joseph was going to be moved out of county to an elderly relative, Cheryl was concerned about the emotional toll on Joseph, should he lose his strong attachment to her and the loving relationship he had with his grandfather. Advokids helped Cheryl identify the legal issues, understand the law, and referred her to an attorney in her area who specialized in dependency law. The judge, recognizing Joseph's need for stability and security, approved Cheryl as the adoptive parent, preserving his critical attachment to Cheryl and preserving his special relationship with his grandfather.

### Hotline Caller Quotes...

*Your information is invaluable to this county. We appreciate all information that we get from you. Thank you so much!!* *County Social Worker*

*"We have learned several issues were handled incorrectly by the courts."*  
*Foster Parent*

*"It was so nice to call and speak directly with a real person and receive helpful advice!"**Foster Parent*

*"Thank you for creating this wonderful source of information."* *Foster Parent*

### Securing and Maintaining Relationships for Children in Foster Care: The Permanency Imperative

Securing and maintaining permanent relationships is key to the emotional and developmental health of our children in foster care. Advokids' educational workshops provide child welfare professionals and foster child advocates with the **science** and the **law** to encourage persistent focus on these emotional and developmental needs. Advokids' multi-disciplinary trainings are available to attorneys, social workers, CASA volunteers, and mental health providers.

### Advokids in the Community



Advokids was thrilled to help ten beautiful Bay Area foster children embarking on their first trip to the snow. The *ADVOKIDS Enrichment Fund* assisted with the cost of lessons, ski clothes, and lift tickets. A great time was had by all.

### Thank you!

Advokids *2nd Annual Casino Night Fundraiser* was a tremendous success. We had over 400 attendees and 128 local corporate and business sponsors. We are grateful to all of our supporters and wish to especially thank our chairwoman, Karen S. Wright, and our dedicated Fundraiser Committee. If you would like to join our 2010 committee, please call or email us!

### SAVE THE DATE!!

**ADVOKIDS 3RD ANNUAL CASINO NIGHT**

**MARCH 6, 2010**



### DONATE TO ADVOKIDS

*Advokids needs your donations to sustain our services and programs. Our annual fundraiser and sponsorships cover ONLY 25% of our annual expenses. Please give now to Change a Lifetime.*

#### Advokids' Programs

 Telephone Hotline

 Educational Website

 Legal Education & Seminars

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

*You may send a check, click the link below to be directed to our "Make a Donation" page, or call us at 415.924.0587 (toll free at 1.877.ADV4KID). We'll be happy to process a credit card payment over the phone.*



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*Advokids is a non-profit organization dedicated to defending the rights and meeting the needs of children who are in the California foster care system.*

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