



News from Advokids

May is National Foster Care Month...

You Can Change a Lifetime

Spring, 2010

Los Angeles Attorney Learns the Ropes and Helps Walk a Child all The Way Home

(A letter from an L.A. lawyer and telephone hotline client)



Advokids is an indispensable organization. I found Advokids.org when I was recruited by friends to help with their adoption of a foster child. Even though my friends were signed up with an organization that had trained and pre-approved them as adoptive parents, they soon found out that they were

part of a system, the family courts, about which they knew nothing. Not only that, but the other players in the system preferred that foster parents cooperate and stay out of the way. But it's impossible to stay out of the way once you develop fierce parental feelings, so my friends needed to know their rights and how the process worked. They didn't want to risk having their child taken away without notice by a system that attempted to balance the rights of all parties rather than putting their child's happiness and well-being first and foremost.

Naturally I started my research the way any competent modern attorney would, on Google! I soon found that only one organization addressed the rights of children and their adoptive families in California, and that was Advokids. I started by using the online forms and instructions for filing De Facto Parent paperwork. The social workers encouraged the family not to file these papers and not to attend hearings, but as it turned out the judge was interested in knowing that the foster parents were passionate and serious enough to show up at hearings (which inevitably involved waiting half a day), and approved the De Facto petition. As the case became more complex, the attorneys at Advokids walked me through the process and explained how the process worked and how we could participate most effectively.

In the meantime, my friends' foster child blossomed from a disassociated little tyke into a grounded, hilarious and deeply bonded child, with an unnervingly accurate memory. She has put down roots surrounded by love from her new family, her extended family and all of their friends and their friends' children.

We are still in the process, but hopeful that time is now on our side. Advokids has been an invaluable advocate to this advocate. Advokids went beyond creating a well-designed and informative website; they reached out of the virtual world into our real world and took time and shared their expertise. And as result, real lives have been touched.

Regards,
Jennifer Hughes

Advokids Legal Seminars



Advokids' legal training team traveled throughout California these past 9 months presenting over 22 seminars and teaching the legal tools for ensuring security and permanency for children in foster care. Our training outreach allows us to form relationships with attorneys, CASA volunteers, social workers, and caregivers throughout the state. These relationships help us improve outcomes for foster children in all 58 counties.

Advokids in the Community



Advokids was thrilled to help send 10 Bay Area foster children on a ski trip again this year. ADVOKIDS Enrichment Fund assisted with the cost of ski equipment rentals, and gas. Advokids also paid tuition for two hard working sixth graders who wanted to attend Science Camp and donated Christmas gift cards to all of Marin County's foster teenagers.

Advokids is participating in the 2010 Marin Human Race on May 8th. To make a donation to our team or to sign up and run/walk with us, please go to



www.marinhumanrace.org/advokids

Adopting a Teenager From Foster Care . . . A Personal Story

(A letter from a telephone hotline client in the process of adopting a 14 year old foster child)



Thank you, Advokids, for listening to me when I needed it and offering your invaluable advice. I'm thankful that I attended your class. Every bit of information has been useful in our adoption of Bruce. God sent Bruce to us as a 14 year old foster child. He quickly ceased to be our foster son and, in our hearts, became our son as if he were born to us. My biological children feel the same way about him. We all want him to be part of our lives forever and luckily, he has the same desire.

Adoption wasn't our goal in fostering children but in educating myself to prepare for Bruce's adoption I learned some sobering facts. Most teens that age out of the system don't have a chance. They are left alone with no tether to the world they live in. It's no wonder the ones that survive it are homeless or in our prison system. Adopting an older child isn't about financing them in adulthood, it's about giving them that tether. All they really need is to have someone to mentally and emotionally call home - someone to listen or offer guidance. Through the adoption of older children we are proactive in changing the future of the adopted teen and our community.

I wonder if Bruce knows the profound impact he's had on our lives. More so, I wonder if Bruce understands that he's helping so many of the "un-adoptable" in our community by inspiring our family to help them and to inspire others to do the same.

Elsa

Fost-Adopt Mom Sends Her Thanks

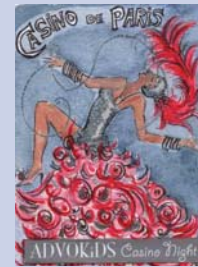
(A Letter from Telephone Hotline client)



I don't know if you even remember me, but I think you probably will. I talked to you many times on the phone regarding my foster daughter. She came to us when she was 19 days old, and they finally terminated her birth parents' parental rights and recommended she be adopted by us a few weeks ago. She is 2½ years old now. You referred us to our attorney (who is awesome). I just want to say thank-you for all your support. It was a really crazy, and very emotionally exhausting case. In February, right before our daughter's 2nd birthday, she was returned to her birth mother for 6 weeks, but returned to us when her birth mom violated court orders. Our baby girl is a very happy loving child, and we are so grateful that we are now able to finally adopt her. Again, thanks for your help, I don't know if you know just how much having you available to talk to helped me. God Bless you, and the work you do.

Cindy

Thank You!



Advokids 3rd Annual Casino Night Fundraiser was a great success. We had over 375 attendees and 120 local corporate and business sponsors. We are grateful to all of our supporters and wish to especially thank our chairwoman, **Karen S. Wright**, our wonderful MC **Tom Sinkovitz**, and our dedicated **Fundraiser Committee**. If you would like to join our 2011 committee, please call or email us.

A Message From Our President

PAYING IT FORWARD

Calls to our telephone hotline have increased exponentially over the past few years. A number of our hotline callers have shown their appreciation for the assistance they received by sending donations to Advokids. These generous people are "paying it forward"--helping to ensure that the assistance they received remains available for those who call in the future. You too can help ensure that the hotline and the website continue to be available to everyone who is concerned about the welfare of a foster child by making a donation to Advokids now. Information on how to donate is below. Every little bit helps. Thank you for helping to keep these services free and available to everyone who calls us for help and information.

Sincerely,

Jan Sherwood
Advokids Board President



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 PayPal link below, 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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