

## Annual Impact Report 2019 - 2020

Dear Supporters,

Thanks to your generous and enduring support, the 2019-2020 fiscal year was yet another landmark year for Advokids, but not for the usual reasons. In early March, pre-pandemic, our Hotline numbers were exceeding our annual 25% increase and our staff was meeting the demand. But in mid-March, when the Covid-19 shelter-in-place order forced the closure of our office, we were really put to the test. With just a few days notice, our staff seamlessly pivoted to "remote" mode. Using our technical tools, including the Salesforce data platform, electronic case files, an e-tasking system, and a remote phone system, we did not miss one day of operations. Our Hotline has remained 100% responsive and all of our system reform campaigns are active. Although our Hotline case numbers decreased at the outset of the pandemic, the urgent nature and the complexity of the calls has increased. Caregivers and relatives of children in foster care were struggling and continue to struggle with navigating a child welfare system that has been turned on its head. Many pre-pandemic directives are no longer safe for children, and new directives were and are hard to find and ever-changing.

Are face-to-face visits between children placed out of the home and their parents or their siblings safe? Who will monitor them? Where will they take place? Will virtual visits work for infants and toddlers? Will adoption finalization hearings be delayed? Children in foster care throughout the state are facing a host of new traumatic events and exposure to risks of emotional and physical harm, but courts and clerk's offices are not fully operational and our 58 California county agencies are not operating in lockstep. We have been working very hard to keep current on all county-specific directives, and are working with our partners at the state and local levels to prevent and mitigate trauma for the children who come to the attention of our Hotline. Covid-19 has presented challenges but it has also presented incredible opportunities to build and leverage relationships, a real silver lining. Children are especially vulnerable right now and we are expecting a surge in child abuse reporting after restrictions have been lifted. Advokids will be there for them because you, our friend and supporter, have been there for us.

We are honored and humbled by your support.

*Margaret Coyne* *Janet A. Sherwood*

### New Cases & CHILDREN SERVED

780   
new cases

1,056   
children impacted

### Why People Call the Hotline AND WHO IS CALLING



Trauma  
A child is at  
risk of harm

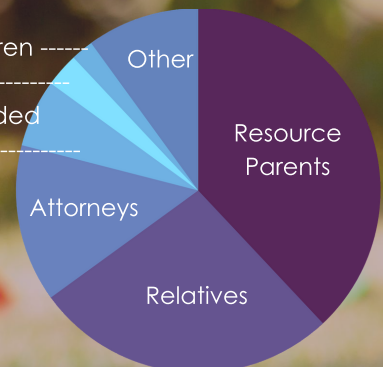


Hotline  
Legal tools  
and support



Protection  
Review by the  
juvenile court

Former Foster Children -----  
Adoptive Parents -----  
Non-Related Extended  
Family Member -----



Children in foster care are the most vulnerable population in the country.

Most have experienced traumatic abuse or neglect.

While in foster care, children often experience compounding fear and anxiety from loss of relationships, multiple placements, and uncertainty.

These compounding traumas can be prevented and mitigated.

## The Compounding Trauma WE MITIGATE



Temporary  
Placements



Loss of  
Relationships



No Mental  
Health Specialist



In Foster Care  
Too Long



Unnecessary  
Moves



No Primary  
Care Physician

### Testimonials

"Your work is changing lives. Thank you for advocating for kids who are not able to do so for themselves. The impact of your work is immeasurable and so is our gratitude."

Melissa, Resource Parent, Los Angeles

"Advokids is a major source for good in a world that desperately needs it, and we've been blessed by Advokids far beyond what we could support in return."

Aaron and Katrina, Resource Parents, Los Angeles

"During this difficult time when it seemed like everyone was against us & no one cared about the best long-term care for my great-niece, Advokids was there to help guide us."

Rachael, Great-Aunt, Riverside

### Aria & Josiah's Story

Yvette and Joseph were resource parents to Aria (3) and her brother, Josiah (4), when they called the Advokids' Hotline, concerned that the children were facing yet another move. The children had already experienced 3 failed placements in the previous 6 months due to their difficult behaviors and now they were to be moved once again to be closer to their mother who had just been released from prison. The children came to Yvette and Joseph with a host of medical and dental conditions from parental neglect and also exhibited many serious behavioral indicators of stress from early childhood trauma and abuse. After 4 months with Yvette and Joseph, they had become happy children who would hug and snuggle because they had learned to trust that they were loved and would be kept safe. Yvette and Joseph were concerned that if the children were moved once again, they would regress after all the progress the children had made in their home. They would lose their trusted caregivers and their medical and therapeutic providers. Advokids' Hotline staff taught Yvette how to petition the juvenile court, share all of the children's vulnerabilities and needs, and seek a court order to

prevent another placement disruption. Yvette and Joseph also promised to do whatever was needed to keep the children connected to their mother. In response to the petition, the county child welfare agency withdrew their notice of removal of the children. The children continue to thrive and catch up developmentally. Their medical and dental health issues continue to be addressed and they are maintaining visits with their mother by Zoom.



I honestly do not think this would have been the outcome had we not had [staff attorney] Lauren there for us to help us, coach us, and walk us through what we needed to do.





## Holding Systems ACCOUNTABLE

California has progressive child welfare laws and procedures to protect foster children and encourage relatives, caregivers, and all concerned adults to step up for them. When these legal and procedural systems fail, we fail children.

In July, Linda called the Advokids Hotline, concerned about her 12-month-old foster daughter's physical and emotional safety during parental visits because the mother did not seem to have the ability to change diapers, or to properly feed, bathe, or soothe the baby. Our Hotline staff taught Linda how to write and file a legal petition to put these concerns before the juvenile court.

The county court clerk was responsible for sending the petition directly to the parties to the case and the judge. That's what the law requires. The clerk however refused, saying it was not her responsibility. Advokids immediately wrote a letter to the county court administrator detailing the system failure and the court administrator quickly responded with an apology and assurances that the law would be followed in the future. Advokids has sent similar demand letters to many California Superior Court Clerks, all with great results. This is how we eliminate barriers to justice for our Hotline clients and all future child advocates seeking to bring critical information about a child to the attention of a county juvenile court.



### 2020 - 2021 GOALS

Grow our teams in the Bay Area & Los Angeles to meet the ever increasing demand for our advocacy services

Grow our statewide Pro Bono Attorney Program and provide boots on the ground in juvenile courts across the state

Grow and expand our efforts to hold child welfare agencies and the courts accountable for the physical and socio-emotional health of all children in foster care in CA

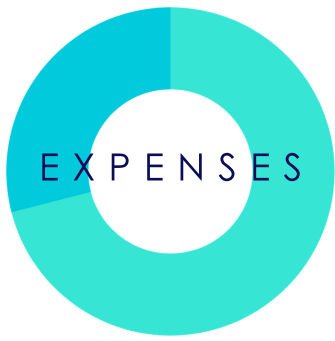


## Increasing Our Staff in SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

One out of every three foster children in the state are under the jurisdiction of the Los Angeles Juvenile Court, so it is vital that Advokids has boots on the ground in LA! We are proud to announce two new LA staff members: Tiffany Sickler, PhD and Jessica Kastner, JD. Tiffany is a licensed clinical psychologist experienced in early childhood trauma, fetal alcohol spectrum disorders, and issues related to foster care and adoption. Jessica Kastner joined Advokids in August 2020 after over a decade of experience as a commercial litigation attorney. Jessica moved from NYC to LA in 2015, where she continued her work as a civil litigator with Dorf & Nelson LLP and served families and youth in Los Angeles on a pro bono basis, primarily in dependency law.



## 2019-2020 FINANCIALS



- Program Services
- Operations



- Grants
- Donations
- Annual Fundraiser
- In-Kind Donations
- Training Fees
- Other Fundraising

## Supporter Spotlight IGNITE A BETTER WORLD

Established in 2014, Ignite A Better World Foundation has the vision of a world in which no child lives in need. This vision, accompanied with the values of integrity, transparency, compassion, responsible stewardship and fairness, guides us to support organizations like Advokids. Our donors are currently primarily associates and close partners of NGK Spark Plugs (USA), Inc, and have been incredibly generous through the initial years of our organization. The directors and volunteers of Ignite A Better World have continually generated idea after idea for fundraising, large and small. Their dedication and enthusiasm are exceptional and vital, especially as we all navigate to be windows of hope in our world during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our mission of improving our world by supporting organizations like Advokids, committed to helping children at risk, is our guide as we continue a journey close to our hearts to help all children living in need.

Megan McDonald,  
Foundation President  
[IGNITEABETTERWORLD.ORG](http://IGNITEABETTERWORLD.ORG)

## Raise a Glass to Advokids

Friday, October 9th 2020  
6:00 pm

Join Advokids for a virtual wine-tasting event from the comfort of your home!

LEARN MORE

