



*The Everychild Symposium*

*State of Our Children: Los Angeles 2013*

## Making a Difference Through Partnerships and Early Intervention



*Sheila Kuehl moderated the symposium's panel of experts.*

On Wednesday, January 23, approximately 125 people gathered for the very first Everychild Foundation State of Our Children: Los Angeles 2013 symposium to learn about challenges facing children in Los Angeles today.

The event was conceived by Denise McCain-Tharnstrom, the chair of the Everychild Foundation's Public Policy Committee and organized by committee members. Held at RAND in Santa Monica, attendees were welcomed by Jacqueline Caster, Everychild Foundation Founder and President.

*"Some issues can't be changed with grant-making alone."*

"We are committed to making a difference in the lives of children, but some issues can't be changed with grant-making alone," Caster said. "We need policy reform and change on behalf of local children. With the all-star roster of speakers gathered here today, we will try to build awareness and work together to solve some of the pressing problems affecting our youth."

The first speaker, Jonathan E. Fielding, Director and Chief Medical Officer for the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health and a leader in the field of public health stated, "Health is interrelated with achievement, contentment and overall success. There is a connection between adverse childhood experiences and major diseases. Family, school and community have the biggest impacts on improving the health outcome for our poorest children."

Dr. Fielding believes that the most important thing we can do to improve overall health is to increase the graduation rate in our schools. He argues that health and educational outcomes are linked and more formal education equals a longer life. "Parents want the best for their kids," he said. "We just need to show them how."

Following the health discussion, a panel of experts involved in children's issues took the stage. The speakers included moderator Sheila Kuehl, former California State Senator; Kim Belshe, Executive Director of First 5 LA; Monica Garcia, President of the LAUSD School Board; and Andrew Bridge, Executive Director, the Child Welfare Initiative (CWI).

Although each panel member covered a different children's issue - early childhood support, public school graduation rates and improvements to the foster care system - they all represented areas that are interrelated and in desperate need of partnership and support. "Partnerships are absolutely critical to us," reported Kim Belshe of First 5 LA. "Money alone is not going to accomplish what we need without further engaging our

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**THE MISSION** of the Everychild Foundation is to ease suffering of children in the Greater Los Angeles area whether due to disease, disability, abuse, neglect or poverty.

## Everychild Foundation Recent Grantees:

# Working Every Day to Help Los Angeles Children

### 2012 Public Counsel/Alliance for Children's Rights

Awarded in November 2012, the grant will provide legal services to all eligible foster children in Southern California who are going through the adoption or guardianship process. In January, the grant agreement was signed and the first payment made. The grant will be formally launched on April 19, 2013, at which time the Everychild sign will be unveiled.

### 2011 Centinela Youth Services

In its second year of funding, the Everychild Restorative Justice Center diverts South Los Angeles teenagers with minor offenses from the juvenile justice system to rehabilitative programs. Major inroads were made during the first year of operation, including support by a network of 26 community-based service providers and community mediation volunteers.

### 2010 Boys and Girls Club of LA Harbor

Our grant funded the expansion and replication of BCLAH's highly successful College Bound Program through website and on-site training and resources.

Statistics support the idea that the College Bound Program is a big success: In 2012, 1128 students participated in the program. An impressive 98% of participating seniors graduated on time; 234 enrolled in two or four-year colleges and universities and received \$3.28 million in financial aid and scholarships. In addition, 50 national clubs, including 10 in the Los Angeles area, have contracts with the Everychild College Bound Program.

### 2009 South Bay Center for Counseling

The Career Pre-Pathways Program, funded over three years by an Everychild grant, links at-risk and out-of-school youth ages 16 to 18 to opportunities for higher education and career development. By the end of 2012, 260 students had enrolled in the Everychild Youth Career Pathway. Of these, 185 remain active. The Urban Arts cohort proved so successful it resulted in a spin-off called StreetcraftLA. This pop-up shop featuring street-art inspired products opened at 2009 Main Street in Santa Monica last fall and will continue for another year in the same location.

## Success Story:

### Restorative Justice Provides Youth a Second Chance

Thomas is a very bright and energetic 15-year-old African-American teen referred to the Centinela Youth Services Everychild Restorative Justice Center by the Inglewood Court for stealing a video game player from his neighbor. This is his second offense.

He has a history of poor academic performance and school suspensions for behavior problems. The Court placed him on formal probation and established requirements for him to maintain a 6 p.m. nightly curfew, improve his grades at school by attending an after-school program, and perform 100 hours of community service.

These conditions were a final effort to keep Thomas out of the juvenile system, where problem teens often get worse not better. It was a tall order, given the problems in his family. His father was jailed for domestic violence, leaving his mother to apply for public assistance to support Thomas and his six siblings.

Thomas completed an in-depth assessment and was enrolled in individual counseling with *Shields for Families*, a licensed mental health provider. The Public Counsel Education Rights Attorney at the Everychild Center assisted Thomas  
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### Grantees 2000 - 2008

2008	St. John's Well Child and Family Center
2007	Mar Vista Family Center
2006	Heart of Los Angeles
2005	LA Orthopaedic Hospital Foundation
2004	Hillsides
2003	Optimist Youth Home
2002	Violence Intervention Program
2001	The Wonder of Reading
2000	Queenscare

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in enrolling back in school at Washington Prep High, but Thomas felt that the school “wasn’t a place where he could learn...only get into more trouble”.

CYS assisted Thomas in moving to Locke 3 Charter High School, a small school with an enrollment of roughly 500 students, a college preparatory focus and a structure of academically themed small learning communities.

Thomas is now completing his community service hours at Locke 3, which offers opportunities for students to participate in food and blood donor drives, health fairs and community clean up activities. He also took the initiative to enroll in AP courses in the Math and Science Program. His grades have improved from an “F” in biology, a “D” in Geometry and an “F” in English to an “A” in Anatomy and Physiology and a “B” in Math. Thomas has earned several monetary stipends for showing progress.

During a recent home visit, Thomas said he plans to use the stipend money to help pay off his restitution and to help his mom. The wraparound services and consistent follow-up and coaching have been critical in helping Thomas move forward. He still has a long way to go, but he feels empowered now to turn his life around one day at a time.

### Everychild Committee Change

The Everychild Salon Committee has been rolled into the Membership Committee with Jamie Meyer as chair.

Jamie is organizing casual dinners for new members so they can learn more about Everychild. The next one is scheduled for late spring 2013.

Work is underway for a salon in the spring on domestic hunger issues. Watch your inbox for details.

### Vicki Baker

## A Special Volunteer

#### When did you join Everychild? Why?

In 2003 I met Jackie Caster, and she told me about Everychild. I liked the giving circle concept, and my husband liked the idea because he saw Everychild as an organization I could support, yet not be pressured to volunteer. He thought it was the perfect charity.



#### But you started volunteering almost immediately, right?

I was never pressured, but I did begin volunteering because I recognized that Everychild was doing important work for children in our community, and I wanted to be a part of that.

**What positions have you held with Everychild?** First I was a member of the Grant Screening Board and then moved up to vice chair and eventually chair. I have also served as the treasurer and secretary.

**What is your current involvement?** Right now I'm on two committees. I've been on the Grant Outreach Committee for 3 years and I will continue to work on that, and I just joined the Grant Monitoring Committee for this year.

**You've been active in Everychild for 10 years...what made you stay involved for so long?** For several reasons. First, I really believe in having my donations benefit my community, so I like the idea that Everychild focuses on Los Angeles. Second, I like the idea that children are the beneficiaries of these grants because my priority is giving for children. Finally, I like the idea that if I give \$5,000 it can be bundled with others and make a single grant of \$1 million that can actually make a difference, which you can't accomplish with an individual \$5,000 donation.

**What is the children's issue that concerns you the most?** Foster children and adoptees. My mother was placed to live with a family that never adopted her. Also, my husband lived in an orphanage for two years, and when adopted, he had a terrible experience. Both my mother and my husband had very difficult childhoods, which impacted them later in life. In addition, my parents became foster parents to a teenager. It enriched the lives of my brother, sister and me, and we remain close to her and her family to this day.

**What would you like to say to others interested in getting more involved with Everychild?** I would say that Everychild members would not regret becoming more involved. It will give them the opportunity to learn about grant making from a knowledgeable consultant and work with a motivated, smart group of women who are improving the lives of children in Los Angeles.

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partners. Together we can achieve meaningful improvements.”

LAUSD’s Monica Garcia asked for involvement. “I have come to tell you that we need you! We need friends like the Everychild Foundation to be interested in our work. By involving more people in the system we will achieve greater success.”

The symposium closed with moving remarks from Mark Ridley-Thomas, Chairman of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. “The business at hand is not only

important, but urgent,” said Ridley-Thomas. “It is not just a moment of compassion, but of passion. A time for us to step up and engage.” His key point, like so many of the symposium speakers, supports the theory that we need to make an investment in children on the front end to avoid costly results on the back end.

“Our challenge is to bring kids out of the margins and cause them to be mainstreamed to make them productive. If we can’t do it for children, who then shall we do it for? If we can reconcile policy and urgency we might be able to make a difference in our time.”

In closing, Denise McCain-Tharnstrom summarized by asking, “Where do we go from here? We need to ensure that LA’s children are our children. Nothing can be solved by advocates, public officials and private philanthropy alone – we need to work together to help change the status quo.”

*For more information on the guest speakers and their organizations along with summaries of the presentations, visit our website at [everychildfoundation.org](http://everychildfoundation.org).*

### Save the Date! October 16

The most important date on Everychild’s calendar is when the two finalists for the 2013 grant make their presentations to the entire membership. Be informed. Mark October 16 on your calendar now and plan to attend.



*Supervisor Mark Ridley Thomas speaks at the Everychild symposium.*

*Membership in the Everychild Foundation is open to all women interested in helping Los Angeles children in need. The annual contribution is \$5,000 and is tax-deductible. To join, send an email to [info@everychildfoundation.org](mailto:info@everychildfoundation.org) or call 310-573-2153. We will respond immediately.*



**EVERYCHILD**  
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Women Reinventing Philanthropy®

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