

the  
**DEFENDER**

**KIND**

KIDS IN NEED OF DEFENSE

Spring 2024

[supportkind.org](http://supportkind.org)



KIND is working to ensure progress and impact in even the most challenging of times



# Meaningful Progress in a Challenging Environment



Top: KIND leadership on Capitol Hill

Bottom: Two young mothers from Honduras (left and right), and their respective children—a 12-year-old (blocked), and a one-year-old—are detained by the United States Border Patrol after rafting across the Rio Grande on the U.S.-Mexico border. (June 2018—Granjeno, Texas)

**KIND and a collaborative of nonprofits launched a joint fundraising effort—working to raise \$3M by June 30 to support 500 Ms. L. class members that do not have legal representation.**

Photos: Top—KIND archives. Bottom—Jahi Chikwendiu/The Washington Post via Getty Images

## Your support makes KIND's pragmatic, effective approach possible

In the face of a shifting political climate and emerging threats to children's safety and well-being, KIND continues to deftly advocate for unaccompanied children and the services they deserve. **Our pragmatic, strongly bipartisan approach** not only helps shield unaccompanied children from being deprived of their legal rights in this current political environment, it also advances protections for this vulnerable population.

## The children and their families torn apart by Zero Tolerance are now eligible for relief under the Ms. L. v. ICE class action settlement

Since the beginning of Zero Tolerance, the policy that resulted in thousands of children being separated from their parents, KIND has been the leading organization providing legal representation and reunifying families. KIND was actively involved in the Ms. L. v. ICE lawsuit, which became the primary tool for stopping the horrific policy. We served on the steering committee, advising on cases and advocating for a settlement that would emphasize family unity and long-term social and legal stability for the affected families.

In October 2023, the ACLU and the U.S. government jointly filed a negotiated settlement agreement, which took effect on December 11, 2023. The agreement, however, fell short: it created a streamlined process for families to apply for asylum but failed to provide them with lawyers to help them in doing so—despite ample evidence that it is extremely difficult to secure asylum without a lawyer. In the United States and abroad, hundreds of individuals will need immediate assistance to advocate for their inclusion in the settlement. **Families will have just two years from the effective date of the settlement agreement to prepare their asylum cases**, which can be a long and painstaking process of gathering evidence, preparing statements, and navigating complex immigration requirements. To help families overcome this barrier and access free legal assistance, KIND helped launch a joint fundraising effort with several partner organizations—including the Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights, Al Otro Lado, Justice in Motion, the National Immigration Project, and Together and Free.

**In the United States we helped reunify 245 families and are providing ongoing legal representation to more than 500 people. Internationally, we provided legal assistance for 1,200 people seeking reunification.**

# Keeping Kids Safe

KIND's ten-year initiative designed to transform outdated laws, center child protection, and reform the way the current U.S. immigration system treats children



## Children's Dockets: Moving toward fairness and due process, relieving strain on the immigration system

### The Children's Court Act and EOIR's Children's Cases in Immigration Court Memorandum

KIND's years of advocacy for a child-appropriate immigration court system have led to fundamental reforms in unaccompanied children's immigration proceedings. KIND conceived the Immigration Court Efficiency and Children's Court Act of 2023, legislation that would mandate specialized children's dockets, enhancing due process for unaccompanied children while simultaneously relieving strain on the immigration court system nationwide. KIND intentionally drafted it as a pragmatic bill that could draw support from both parties. That vision became a reality in November 2023, when a bipartisan, bicameral group of congressional champions introduced the bill.

With this legislation serving as a model of bipartisan support for child-centered court procedures—and following extensive advocacy by KIND—the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) released a new Director's Memorandum, *Children's Cases in Immigration Court*, in December 2023. It requires immigration courts to establish specialized juvenile dockets for unaccompanied children's cases, holding them apart from adult cases. Dedicated judges receiving continual training will oversee the dockets. The memo defines certain child-friendly practices the courts should adopt, and protocols for better identifying and mitigating child trafficking and exploitation. It also establishes procedures anticipated to streamline immigration judges' dockets. The memo does not go as far as the requirements of the Children's Court Act, but it reflects substantial progress.

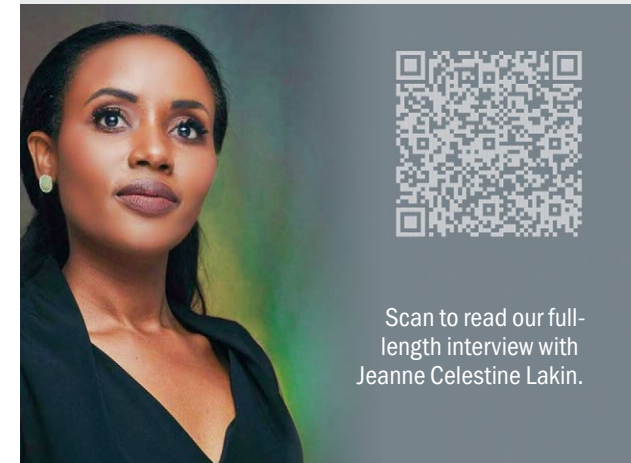
**KIND will advocate for expanded bipartisan sponsorship of the Children's Court Act and robust implementation of the Children's Cases memorandum at immigration courts nationwide.**

## Jeanne Celestine Lakin Joins Keeping Kids Safe Leadership Council

*KIND is thrilled to welcome the newest member of the Leadership Council. Jeanne is an award-winning author, an inspirational national and international speaker, and a leader in addressing and preventing human trafficking.*

"For me, every opportunity is a platform to advocate for a trauma-informed court system, healthcare, education, and immigration reform. The scars of abuse should not dictate a child's future, and society must ensure children's safety and their well-being. My journey is a testament to resilience and a commitment to ensuring that no person—and especially children—has to endure the darkness that once enveloped my life.

"As a parent and as someone who has lived experience needing somebody to protect me, I see that you come in and protect and fend for those who cannot fend for themselves. KIND is doing the right thing. What am I excited about? To be a voice for these children. To use my expertise to help these kids. Anything I can do to support KIND and the Keeping Kids Safe campaign, to support these children, I am 100 percent all in."



Scan to read our full-length interview with Jeanne Celestine Lakin.

**KEEPING KIDS SAFE**

A seamless safety net for children on the move



You help connect children to crucial services after their release from federal custody

# The Opportunities for Youth Initiative

## In California, an Innovative and Promising Collaboration



KIND staff and members of OFY agencies at an October 2023 gathering hosted by KIND. The project partners connected in person, shared findings, and celebrated the achievements of the three-year project.

### In 2019, in response to the increasing numbers of unaccompanied children arriving in California,

Governor Gavin Newsom redoubled the state's commitment to immigrants and asylum seekers. In two budgets, he funded the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to provide social services to unaccompanied children after their release from federal custody. This mandate became the Opportunities for Youth initiative.

### Empowering partners and building connections

The OFY initiative's overarching goal was to create trauma-informed, culturally responsive programs to help unaccompanied children and youth successfully integrate into their new communities and into life with their families or sponsors. CDSS planned and designed the pilot and project in collaboration with KIND as the technical assistance partner, Harder+Company Community Research, and Dr. Stephanie Canizales. This collaborative became the Opportunities for Youth Interdisciplinary Partnership. Each partner has wide-ranging experience serving immigrant populations; **KIND was chosen as the leading agency in the United States providing holistic legal representation and psychosocial support to unaccompanied immigrant and refugee children.** With CDSS staff, the partnership supported and guided eight participating service providers, whose practice areas cover five areas in California (see *graphic*). The initiative launched in October 2020.

### Expertise and flexibility in the face of challenges

The OFY partners faced challenges providing services during the span of the project—from contact restrictions and illness during height of the COVID-19 pandemic, to major floods and fires, to changing federal immigration policies that directly impacted the youth and their families. KIND built and adapted our assistance framework to enable partners to work and respond nimbly. In addition to providing training and capacity-building exercises, we tailored resources and support to the needs of the communities. We created an online “portal,” a knowledge base that enabled project partners to maintain continuity of operations and communications, and helped them hire and acclimate new staff. Providers could access the portal resources at their own pace and based on their own technological comfort levels. KIND, CDSS, and Harder also organized forums for providers to share feedback, receive advice and support, and discuss promising practices.

### Early successes, future promise

Adapting services to the experiences and needs of unaccompanied youth has shown promise. With the support of the collaborative network, providers found and shared new ways to connect youth to essential resources like legal representation, physical and mental health care, and school enrollment. Because OFY extends eligibility for post-release services to youth older than 18, the initiative educated multiple school districts about the unique needs of youth between the ages of 18 and 21. Among other successes, this led to supporting students who need to work during school hours by connecting them with adult schools for evening classes; some students were able to return to school and work toward their high school diploma.

KIND's policy team played a key role in advocating for and securing refunding for the program. Governor Newsom funded OFY for another three years in the 2023–2024 budget.

**“OFY agencies are uniquely able to serve the unaccompanied minors who are hardest to reach: tender-aged children, teen parents and youth workers. OFY also offers support to unaccompanied young people until the age of 21, three years later than services offered by the federal government.”**

#### Dr. Stephanie Canizales

*CalMatters* magazine, “California program for migrant children could be a national model”— March 31, 2023

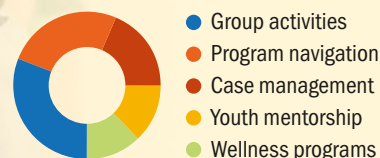
## Opportunities for Youth | 2020–2023

### Participation

Individuals served  
(youth, sponsors,  
family members)

3,617

### By service offering



**Some providers expressed amazement at the transformation of the youth in the project—from sometimes feeling scared and unsure in social situations, to creating personal support systems.**

### Eight service providers successfully implemented the project:

Canal Alliance	Esperanza	Mixteco/Indigena
Centro La Familia	Immigrant	Community Organizing Project
Advocacy Services	Rights Project	Oakland Unified
Community	International	School District
Justice Alliance	Institute of	San Bernardino Community
	Los Angeles	Service Center

### They serve the following areas in California:

Alameda	Los Angeles	San Joaquin
Contra Costa	Marin	Santa Barbara
Fresno	Merced	Stanislaus
Kern	Sacramento	Tulare
Kings	San Bernardino	Ventura

### No child should have to appear alone before judges and prosecutors

## Attorney of the Day Program

The Attorney of the Day program (AOD) at the San Francisco Immigration Court works to address the lack of universal representation for adults and unaccompanied children in the Bay Area. KIND's attorneys and paralegals focus on the juvenile docket—typically, unaccompanied children (21 years old or younger) in an Office of Refugee Resettlement shelter, or children in immigration proceedings separate from their parents' immigration case. KIND attorneys also use the AOD program as a training opportunity for staff to understand how initial hearings in immigration court are conducted and to assess relief for these youth.

**“When you walk into immigration court for filings you tend to see immigrants standing in corners, basically pleading with attorneys for help because they don't know what their documents mean [...] a lot of people don't even know who to call, how to get started.”**

Amanda Maya Daneshzadeh  
KIND Senior Staff Attorney

A typical day looks like this: KIND's attorneys and paralegals sign in and review the day's juvenile docket. The Immigrant Center for Women and Children (ICWC) provides a presentation for anyone in court that day. The attorneys meet and get a list of those who do not have representation. (ICWC and KIND are members of the San Francisco Immigrant Legal Defense Collaborative, a collective of 15 organizations dedicated to serving the San Francisco immigrant community.) The attorneys introduce themselves to those needing representation, explain what their legal services are, and ask who would like help. They meet with each unrepresented child for about 25 minutes to learn about the child, figure



Pausing a moment before beginning their day at San Francisco Immigration Court are (left to right) KIND Senior Staff Attorney Amanda Maya Daneshzadeh and KIND paralegals Gina Ramirez and Jeremy Costello

out what their options are, and explain what types of relief for which they may be eligible. Then, they speak on behalf of the child in the proceedings. AOD attorneys and paralegals typically see about 15 unrepresented families each day.

KIND Senior Staff Attorney Amanda Maya Daneshzadeh shares: “The judges are very understanding and cooperative, and support what the AOD program is doing. The children have high levels of fear and worry—just having someone with them to advocate for them and explain to them what's happening is a substantial relief. Being involved with the program has given me hope that there's discussion within the San Francisco immigration court that juveniles shouldn't be testifying in court.” She hopes that the Bay Area AOD program will serve as a model for implementing trauma-informed, child-friendly processes across immigration courts in the United States.



## In-Kind Giving: Your Support Transforms Lives

# Hispanic Heritage Foundation Donates Laptops, Staff Time for Clients in California

“We’re not just giving them technology; we’re offering a pathway to opportunity.”

Last fall, the Hispanic Heritage Foundation contacted KIND’s Los Angeles office to ask if 25 clients would be interested in attending a week-long coding camp. We responded that while we were grateful for the offer, the reality is that most of KIND’s California clients do not have the technology required for coding. According to the Public Policy Institute of California, progress on digital equity (devices and internet access) in the state stalled in 2021. **Forty-one percent of low-income households still do not have full digital access for distance learning; neither do 37 percent of Latine households.**<sup>1</sup> In fact, most of KIND’s clients face a digital divide.

The Foundation responded with incredible generosity: they donated 200 new laptops. They also provided two teachers to lead virtual and in-person workshops on digital literacy and coding. We distributed 75 laptops in Fresno and 125 in Los Angeles, and will assist clients with signing up for low-income internet programs. This significant donation marks a pivotal step in bridging the digital gap for unaccompanied youth. The laptops will empower them not only to participate in the coding camp, but also to engage in virtual mental health therapy, attend doctors’ appointments, pursue ESL/GED classes, and connect with KIND’s legal team when they need to do so.



Sixty-two KIND clients attended HHF’s March 2024 Digital Literacy Workshop, either in person or virtually. At the event (left to right): KIND client Virginia, Jackie Garcia and Diana Diaz Madera from KIND’s social services team, and HHF staffers Daisy, and Marvin Tapia

This donation allows our California staff to dream bigger. With their newly digitally accessible clients, the staff can explore implementing new initiatives—including workforce readiness, welfare benefits applications, study groups for driver’s license tests, workshops on social issues, and much more. Virtual offerings will also help reduce access barriers often faced by unaccompanied youth in both rural and urban settings: lack of transportation, long travel distances, or traffic.

“We want all kids to ‘get on the fast track’ to pathways in tech. All youth—especially the most underserved, which includes rural areas—deserve access to a tech-based education and the opportunity to enter the workforce and the rest of their lives in a stronger position.”

**Antonio Tijerino**  
President and CEO, Hispanic Heritage Foundation

Jazmin Leon, a social services coordinator in KIND’s Fresno office, said: “By providing Chromebooks to our clients, especially those in rural areas of the Valley, we’re not just giving them technology; we’re offering a pathway to opportunity. Amidst challenges like food insecurity and limited transportation, these devices serve as more than tools; they break down the digital barriers, empowering our clients with access to workforce readiness programs, the ability to apply for benefits, and even meet with their attorneys or attend telehealth appointments.” Jackie Garcia, a senior social services coordinator in KIND’s Los Angeles office, observed: “Witnessing the client’s huge smile, and seeing them touch the laptop with so much care is beyond impactful. Not only does this laptop bring so many emotions, but it brings so much hope, dreams, and opportunities to succeed.”

“Quiero agradecer a los donantes que me han regalado la computadora porque me va a service para poder seguir estudiando a distancia y trabajar. Mil gracias por ella.”

KIND client in Los Angeles

“Donations of laptops not only provide access to technology, but also open the door to educational and professional opportunities for those who need it most.”

KIND client in Fresno



Creemos En Ti!  
(We believe in you!)  
KIND staff designed this label and attached one to the box of each donated computer.

See full English translation below.

Jose, a client from California’s Central Valley, anticipates using his new laptop to continue his English classes virtually.



Sisters Maria and Heydi, clients in our Los Angeles office, look forward to using their laptops to further their education.

Translations

### WE BELIEVE IN YOU!

The gift of this computer was possible thanks to the collaboration of the Hispanic Heritage Foundation and KIND. We hope you find it useful as you chase your dreams, whether in work, education, art or other areas of your interest. We believe in you and are proud to serve you.

“I want to thank the donors who have given me the computer because it will help me to continue studying remotely and to work. Thank you so much for it.”

## Spotlight: KIND Pro Bono Attorneys



Associates Sarah Besnoff and Claire Saba Murphy  
Paul Hastings LLP

Sarah and Claire were Pro Bono Attorneys of the Month in November 2023. They provided excellent support and legal representation for their client, who escaped the threat of death at the hands of gang members in El Salvador. In 2023 they presented his case before an immigration judge at the Adjudication Center in Falls Church, Virginia, and secured a grant of asylum. The client is now able to live in the United States in safety and stability.



### When and why did you first take a KIND pro bono case?

**SB:** Mine was in 2019 when I jumped into a trial team to support a child who had fled gang violence against his family. It was imperative to me to use my legal education to promote human rights, including in private practice. KIND provides incredible opportunities for lawyers to support brave children exercising their human rights to asylum, to security, to non-discrimination, and to the full exercise of their freedom and dignity.

**CSM:** I joined a case when I first entered private practice in 2021. I previously worked on an asylum matter during law school through a clinic and wanted to continue to help others gain asylum as a pro bono attorney when I joined private practice. As the daughter of a Syrian immigrant, I know first-hand how immigration can impact future generations. Assisting children gain asylum is a small way to help others on their path to a brighter future.

### What have you learned from this experience or from your client?

**SB:** Children tell their stories differently than adults, and our immigration system does not do enough to protect children and recognize these differences.

**CSM:** That although someone may present with a brave facade, it is very important to recognize the stress and trauma that a person (especially a child) may still carry.

### What is the most surprising thing you’ve learned about the U.S. immigration system?

**SB:** The U.S. immigration system is impossible to manage without an attorney, and yet there is no right to counsel.

**CSM:** How much you can impact a case by being perseverant. Although it can be discouraging to leave messages with various government agencies without response, being persistent and creative pays off.

Top: Sarah Besnoff; bottom: Claire Saba Murphy

<sup>1</sup> Gao, Niu. “Testimony: California’s K-12 Digital Divide Has Narrowed, but Access Gaps Persist.” Public Policy Institute of California, February 24, 2024. <https://www.ppic.org/blog/testimony-californias-k-12-digital-divide-has-narrowed-but-access-gaps-persist/>



# Passing the Torch and Welcoming New Expertise

## KIND Co-Founder Brad Smith Transitions to Board Chair Emeritus After 15 Years at the Helm

KIND celebrates Brad Smith's legacy and the elevation of Pamela Passman to Board Chair. We also welcome three new Board members, who bring deep legal expertise and a strong commitment to cultivating pro bono partners to help protect children.



**Pamela Passman**  
New Board Chair

KIND's Board of Directors selected Pamela Passman as its next chair. As Brad Smith noted in KIND's official announcement, Ms. Passman is "a strategic, experienced leader, whose vision for KIND will ensure its stability and success for many years to come." She previously served as Board Vice Chair, has served on the Board's Executive Committee since KIND was founded, and brings decades of experience in empowering organizations seeking to strengthen their impact and influence.

Ms. Passman is Global Chair, Corporate Advising, and Managing Director of APCO's New York office. She works with clients on organizational purpose and impact, managing risk in global operations and the intersection of technology and policy. She is the former President of the Center for Responsible Enterprise and Trade (CREATe.org) and Vice Chair of the Ethisphere Institute, distinct entities that promote leading practices and provide solutions to manage governance, compliance and risks for companies and their global value chains.

It was during her time at the Microsoft Corporation that Ms. Passman worked closely with Brad Smith and Angelina Jolie to found KIND. She was the Corporate Vice President and Deputy General Counsel, Global Corporate and Regulatory Affairs, and led Microsoft's public policy and regulatory compliance work across a range of issues related to cloud computing, and its global government relations. She also had leadership responsibility for Microsoft's philanthropic programs and its cross-company global corporate citizenship efforts. She first joined Microsoft in 1996 and until 2002 led the Legal and Corporate Affairs organization in Asia, based in Tokyo, with a focus on Japan, Korea, and the People's Republic of China.

Prior to joining Microsoft, Ms. Passman practiced law with Covington & Burling in Washington, D.C., and Nagashima & Ohno in Tokyo, Japan. She serves on the Board of Kinaxis Inc., a Toronto-listed SAAS supply chain management company, chairs its Nominations and Governance Committee, and serves on its Audit Committee. She is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and serves on its Nominating and Governance Committee.

Ms. Passman is a graduate of the University of Virginia School of Law and of Lafayette College, where she serves on its board of trustees, chairs its Student Life Committee, and serves on its Audit and Compensation committees.



**Horacio Gutierrez**  
Senior Executive VP, Chief Legal and Compliance Officer, The Walt Disney Company

Mr. Gutierrez serves as the chief legal officer, overseeing attorneys responsible for all aspects of Disney's legal, public policy and government affairs around the world, and acts as a strategic advisor to executive leadership and the Board of Directors. His areas of accountability include intellectual property, litigation, compliance, corporate governance, M&A transactional law, securities law, regulatory matters, privacy protection, and global ethics; and patent, copyright, and trademark labor and employment issues. He holds a Master of Laws from Harvard Law School; a Juris Doctor from the University of Miami School of Law; and a Bachelor of Laws and post-graduate diploma from Universidad Católica Andrés Bello in Caracas, Venezuela.



**Amy Pannoni**  
Vice President and Deputy General Counsel, HR Legal, Microsoft

Ms. Pannoni leads a cross-functional team of employment- and immigration-law attorneys, immigration specialists, program managers, business managers and data analysts. She oversees Microsoft's U.S. and global employment law, immigration, and employment compliance teams. She is the Microsoft executive sponsor for the Street Law legal diversity pipeline and mentor for women in law. She is a member of the American Employment Law Council and the in-house co-chair for the American Bar Association Equal Employment Opportunity subcommittee. She received her law degree from the University of Virginia and her bachelor's degree from Princeton University.



**Amanda Vaughn**  
Deputy General Counsel, Bank of America

Ms. Vaughn is responsible for global litigation, eDiscovery, and internal enterprise investigations. She joined Bank of America in 2006 from Davis Polk & Wardwell. Prior to joining Davis Polk, she served as a law clerk to a federal district court judge. She is a member of Bank of America's Global Diversity and Inclusion and Investing in Women councils. She also serves on the Board of Directors of NYC Outward Bound Schools, which partners with New York City public schools to support underserved communities, and on the Board of Advisors of Vanderbilt Law School.

Thank you for your investment in our efforts to protect children and reunite families.

KIND is the preeminent U.S.-based nongovernmental organization devoted to the protection of unaccompanied and separated children. KIND envisions a world in which every unaccompanied child on the move has access to legal counsel and has their rights and well-being protected as they migrate alone in search of safety.

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Find more about KIND at [supportkind.org](https://supportkind.org) and @supportkind on social media.



KIND has a long-standing commitment to fiscal responsibility and is proud to receive the highest possible ranking from Charity Navigator for our finance and accountability practices.

COVER PHOTO  
A young asylum seeker peers through the border wall. (May 2023—San Diego, CA)  
Jon Putman/SOPA Images/LightRocket via Getty Images