



**Boys &
Girls Aid**

SPRING 2021

Connect



FOSTERING FUTURES *for a Better Outcome*

BOYS & GIRLS AID HAS BEEN SERVING CHILDREN for more than 135 years to help ensure every child has a safe and loving place to call home. While no family is perfect, we all do better when we have someone who supports us and cares about us.

Life is challenging for the nearly 8,000 children living in Oregon foster care. They need us now more than ever. When you support Boys & Girls Aid, you are supporting critical services for children.

Foster Care for Youth

THERAPEUTIC PROGRAMS: Boys & Girls Aid provides four distinct therapeutic foster care programs each designed to help kids heal from past trauma and get them to a better place in very specific ways. These programs serve youth 4 to 18 years of age who are under the care of the State of Oregon.

Foster Family Support

RELIEF CARE: Relief parents support full-time foster parents, providing time off when they need it and helping to ensure children living in Oregon's foster care system receive the best possible care. Relief parents can also provide care for a child who is waiting to find a longer-term home.

FAMILY SUPPORT: Boys & Girls Aid's family support clinician is dedicated to creating stability for foster children and families. This position provides skills training for children, parent support teaching and trauma-informed parenting tools.

Foster Adoption

For more than 1,500 foster children in the State of Oregon, adoption is the best path to permanency. Boys & Girls Aid recruits and works with families throughout the foster care adoption process. Our Child Specific Recruitment services involves preparing children for permanency.



Boys & Girls Aid is committed to finding permanent, loving and stable families for children in Oregon.

1 Individual care

We invest the time to understand each child's history and what they need in a family.

2 A strong network

We use 135+ years of experience and networking to find the right family for each child.

3 Support throughout the process

We support the transition to permanent families to ensure success.



Finding Connection

Letter from Suzan Huntington, President & CEO

Dear Friends,

Thank you to everyone who joined us virtually for the 5th Annual Fostering Futures event. The event was very successful, and I was astounded by the generosity and supportive comments we received throughout. Whether you were able to participate or not, I know we could not do our work without you.

As you know, for more than 135 years Boys & Girls Aid continues to be dedicated to the children and families we serve; we believe so strongly that children will always have better outcomes when they have adults in their lives who are supporting and loving them. Whether you are a long-time supporter, or this is your first newsletter, I want you to know we will never give up on the children we serve. We know these children are talented, smart, and resilient. We know that when given the benefit of the doubt and an opportunity to be supported, these children will thrive. They will

overcome their barriers; they will stop bouncing from foster home to foster home and they will be able to overcome their trauma.

As we are rounding what I hope is the final corner of this pandemic, I want you to know how important you and your family are to us. I am so grateful that you continue to support this vital work. Thank you for seeing and recognizing the potential of children living in foster care. And thank you for giving the children we serve the benefit of the doubt. In this issue, you will read about Matthew “Bubba” Prows. His beautiful story demonstrates firsthand what a difference a loving family can make for the children we serve. All the children we serve are eager to be connected with a family of their own. Whether returning home or through adoption, all our youth served want to have the support and love we all know is important.

Thank you for believing in the work we do and for being an important part of the village who ensures no child is forgotten. Wishing you and your family good health and peace.

With gratitude,

Suzan Huntington, Ed.D.
President & CEO

Boys & Girls Aid believes that children will always have better outcomes when they have adults in their lives who are supporting and loving them.

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Because of You



BOYS & GIRLS AID HAS BEEN SERVING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES FOR OVER 135 YEARS BECAUSE OF THE support of amazing people like you who join us in believing, 'It's All About Family!' We extend a big heartfelt thank you to the wonderful individuals mentioned below and *everyone* who gives of their time and resources to the children and families we serve. Because of you, lives are being changed.

IN FEBRUARY CYPRESS BRANCH AUXILIARY VOLUNTEER, ELAINE SWYT, WAS honored with the Wilsonville First Citizen Award by the Rotary Club of Wilsonville, Oregon. The First Citizen Award is given to an individual active in community engagement who improves the lives and well-being of Wilsonville residents. Elaine volunteers with several community and non-profit organizations, including Boys & Girls Aid. Thank you, Elaine, for supporting Boys & Girls Aid and your local community.



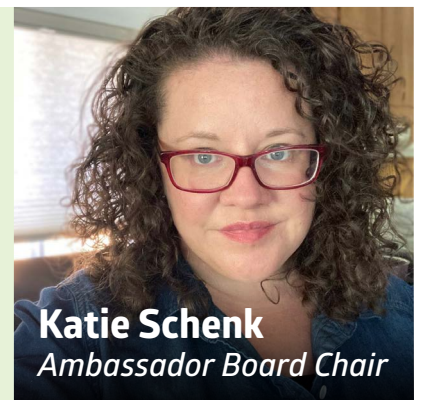
Elaine Swyt
Cypress Auxiliary Volunteer



Mary Stumpf
Board Member

BOYS & GIRLS AID IS PLEASED TO WELCOME MARY STUMPF TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS. Mary and her wife Jennifer are the proud parents of three children, Andrea, Brody and Karli. Brody and Karli were adopted at birth from Boys & Girls Aid. Mary and her family live in Seattle, Washington where she has worked at Starbucks for nearly 30 years. She is currently the Director of International Technology Services. The family's favorite activities are camping, hiking, sports, board games and being outside in nature. Mary is passionate about enriching the lives of children and what it means to grow up in a loving home where you feel heard, seen and valued. Teaching children to know they matter is a core value she holds dear to her heart. We are grateful to have you Mary!

WHAT AN HONOR TO HAVE KATIE SCHENK, BOYS & GIRLS AID BOARD OF Ambassadors Chair and all-around extraordinary volunteer. She attended her first Fostering Futures event with a friend in 2016, and it was the first time she learned about the true experiences for children in foster care as well as the struggles of being a foster parent. Katie was moved by these stories and got involved and committed right away. She now enjoys serving as the chair of the Ambassador Board inspiring others to support Boys & Girls Aid and introducing more people to our mission. Katie is an IT Analyst for Multnomah County and enjoys living on the river in Scappoose, Oregon. Thanks for your commitment Katie!



Katie Schenk
Ambassador Board Chair



Ron & Donna Kasabian
Board Member & Volunteers

RON, WHO SERVES ON OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS, AND HIS WIFE DONNA ARE TWO of our many champions for the children served at Boys & Girls Aid. They have supported Boys & Girls Aid in countless ways. Recently, they prepared and delivered delicious homemade meals for our Nest and Seneca programs. In total they made meals for eight weeks, feeding more than 60 youth and staff. This was a tremendous help to staff and reminded our youth how much our community cares. Donna, a wonderful quilter, made and donated several quilts to the young women who live at our Cypress House. Thank you, Ron and Donna, for making a difference in the lives of children living in foster care!

Building Brighter Futures Together

EVENT SPONSORS, COMMUNITY PARTNERS, AND VOLUNTEERS ALL PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN making Fostering Futures a success. Putting on our first ever live virtual event, we were unsure what the reception would be. Thankfully our amazing BGAid community showed us once again their dedication and commitment to helping the children and families we serve. Together we can build a brighter future for children in foster care.



The Standard Presenting Sponsor

We are honored by the dedication of The Standard, a company steeped deep in compassion. The Standard has been a presenting sponsor since we began Fostering Futures and their generosity is astounding. Through The Standard's work and support, we are able to participate in a variety of local community events which allows us to highlight our mission.

First Interstate Bank Visionary Sponsor

First Interstate Bank is committed to supporting the local community. First Interstate Bank was a visionary sponsor for Fostering Futures and made a generous donation to help provide nutritious meals for teens in our Seneca Program. Thank you First Interstate Bank for caring for the children and families we serve.

KOIN Media Sponsor

Boys & Girls Aid had our first media sponsor with KOIN. For nine weeks, KOIN highlighted the work of Boys & Girls Aid in an effort to recruit foster families. We were featured in advertisements and segments, all benefiting the overall need. KOIN was receptive in our messaging and helped us to share our message in a compassionate and thoughtful way. Thank you KOIN for the excellent coverage of the current needs of the foster care system.

Fundraising Ambassadors

Thank you to the over fifty Fundraising Ambassadors who advocated for children in foster care by inviting their friends and families to join them in supporting Boys & Girls Aid. Thank you for sharing your commitment to making a difference for children in foster care and helping to ensure every child has a safe and nurturing place to call home.

*Want to watch
Fostering Futures?*

Scan the QR code

OR VISIT [youtube.com/boysandgirlsaid](https://www.youtube.com/boysandgirlsaid)



Every child
DESERVES A FAMILY.



Brody
& Karli
ADOPTED
2008 & 2011



**Boys &
Girls Aid**

*Support a child in need.
Give today.*

boysandgirlsaid.org/donate



When 'I Love You' Means Everything

Ask Amanda Prows if she loves her two children Matthew and Audrey differently and you may be surprised when she answers, "Absolutely."

“
**No child enters
foster care because
of anything they
did wrong.**”

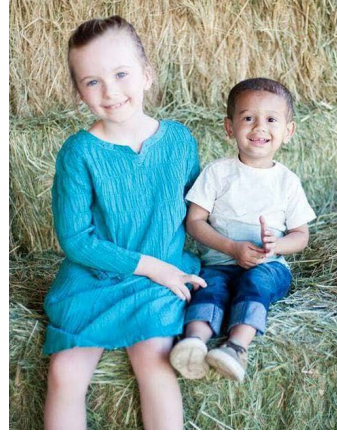
Her reply is not because she loves either child less, it is because of the different paths in which each child made her husband Kelly and herself a family.

Matthew, or Bubba as his friends and family affectionally call him, was two weeks old when he entered foster care. His young birth parents were victims of violence, substance abuse, poverty, and trauma when they were children resulting in developmental delays; they were not equipped to safely parent Matthew.

“One of the reasons we decided to adopt was because no child enters foster care because of anything they did wrong,” recalls Amanda.

When their biological daughter Audrey shared with her parents that there were other boys and girls in this world who needed love and that she would be willing to share her parents with them, Amanda and Kelly’s hearts were opened to the idea of adoption. They began looking into foster care adoption to complete their family. Eventually they contacted Boys & Girls Aid to learn more about the process. After a year of training and classes they were matched with Bubba.

Once matched, and with the support of Boys & Girls Aid, they sprang into gear and got everything ready for his arrival. The two weeks of prep felt like forever. During this time, Amanda



analyzed every detail of the one photo she had and called his foster mom to learn all she could. When the day finally came for them to meet Matthew, something magical happened.

“He looked up at me, tracing my face with his hands, making a lovey-dovey sound. His caseworker was sitting there watching, and said, ‘Look at that, he knows, he knows you are his mom.’”

The Prows remember Matthew’s first days and weeks as easygoing. He was a happy baby interested in everything. However, after a while, reality took hold. Even at a young age, the Prows could tell their baby was starting to wonder where his foster mom was and what this new situation was all about. Their Boys & Girls Aid clinician helped them through this challenging season.

Aside from entering foster care at a young age, Matthew faced other hurdles in his early life. He had to grieve the loss of his foster mom whom he had a strong attachment to, physical limitations with stiffness in his legs and torso from in-utero trauma, and emotional trauma.

Amanda acknowledges the emotional trauma was the most difficult for her and Matthew. “Bubba had never had a dad, older sister or animals in his life, so Kelly, Audrey and our pets were easy for him to love. He would go to Kelly if he was sad, and he felt free and happy playing with Audrey and our pets. I was his third mom though, and for a long time he pushed me away out of fear I would someday abandon him.”

With strong support from his family, Matthew made amazing strides. He is now confident, funny, outgoing and makes friends easily. He has surpassed all his physical therapy goals, and despite his early setbacks, he is now a gymnast and athlete. The Prows have so much to reflect on and be grateful for as they watch Matthew start first grade in the fall.

Amanda knows this path was difficult but appreciates every bit the journey her family has experienced. “Our love was chosen, fought for, earned over time. I can tell you now that every single time Matthew says, ‘I love you, mommy,’ my heart skips a beat. I am still so proud of his strength and resiliency to be able to get there with me. It didn’t come easy, but he knows he is a Prows and he knows I am his mom forever.” 🌱



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9320 SW Barbur Blvd. #200
Portland, OR 97219

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May is National Foster Care Month



*Foster
Love*

Please join us in recognizing that we each can play a part in enhancing the lives of children living in Foster Care.

May is National Foster Care month and in Oregon, nearly 8,000 children are living in foster care. Our gratitude goes out to all the foster parents, volunteers and donors who make the commitment to support a child in foster care!

#fosterlove

