

MEDIA PACKET



For additional information or to schedule interviews, contact:

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HOW IT STARTED >

In 1993 Terry Baugh went to Russia to adopt a child. While visiting the orphanage she saw babies languishing, without sufficient caregivers, without stimulation, and without any hope for families or a future. Later that year, her long-time friend and business partner, Randi Thompson, traveled to a Kazakhstani orphanage and saw the same thing – but she saw the older kids, who were being forced to leave the orphanage as early as ages 15 through 18 – with no place to go. Concerned with what they were seeing, Terry and Randi started doing their homework and discovered that millions of children were growing up in orphanages around the world – but no government entity was officially counting nor was there global support to deinstitutionalize these children and help them grow up in families. With a strong belief that it's not okay for children to grow up without parents, Randi and Terry started Kidsave to create change so children everywhere, especially older kids, would grow up in families or connected to caring adults. Since 1999 Kidsave has directly served more than 13,000 children.

ABOUT US >

Kidsave, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) charity, helps older children and teens living in U.S. residential facilities, foster homes, group homes, and orphanages overseas, find loving parents and lifelong mentors through our unique Family Visit Model. A volunteer-effort, Kidsave works with governments and communities worldwide to see that no orphan or foster child is forgotten, and every child grows up in a family with love and hope for a successful future.

IMPACT >

Connected, caring relationship with an adult is THE KEY FACTOR in preventing youth violence, and those connections help kids complete high school, avoid drugs, and find productive jobs. Neuroscience now demonstrates that institutionalized children have reduced brain activity, reduced IQ, smaller brain size, and difficulty forming emotional bonds to others. Children from U.S. foster care do not do well. About half end up in jail, girls turn to prostitution and are trafficked, 1/3 end up on the streets. About 10% commit suicide. Forty to sixty percent do not finish high school. Four of ten become teen parents; very few graduate from college. And children who have experienced these traumas can become successful adults under the care of a stable, loving adult. Because they have no parenting or family role models their children also end up in the system. It's a tragic, vicious cycle. These damaging effects and outcomes can be avoided with nurturing parental care.

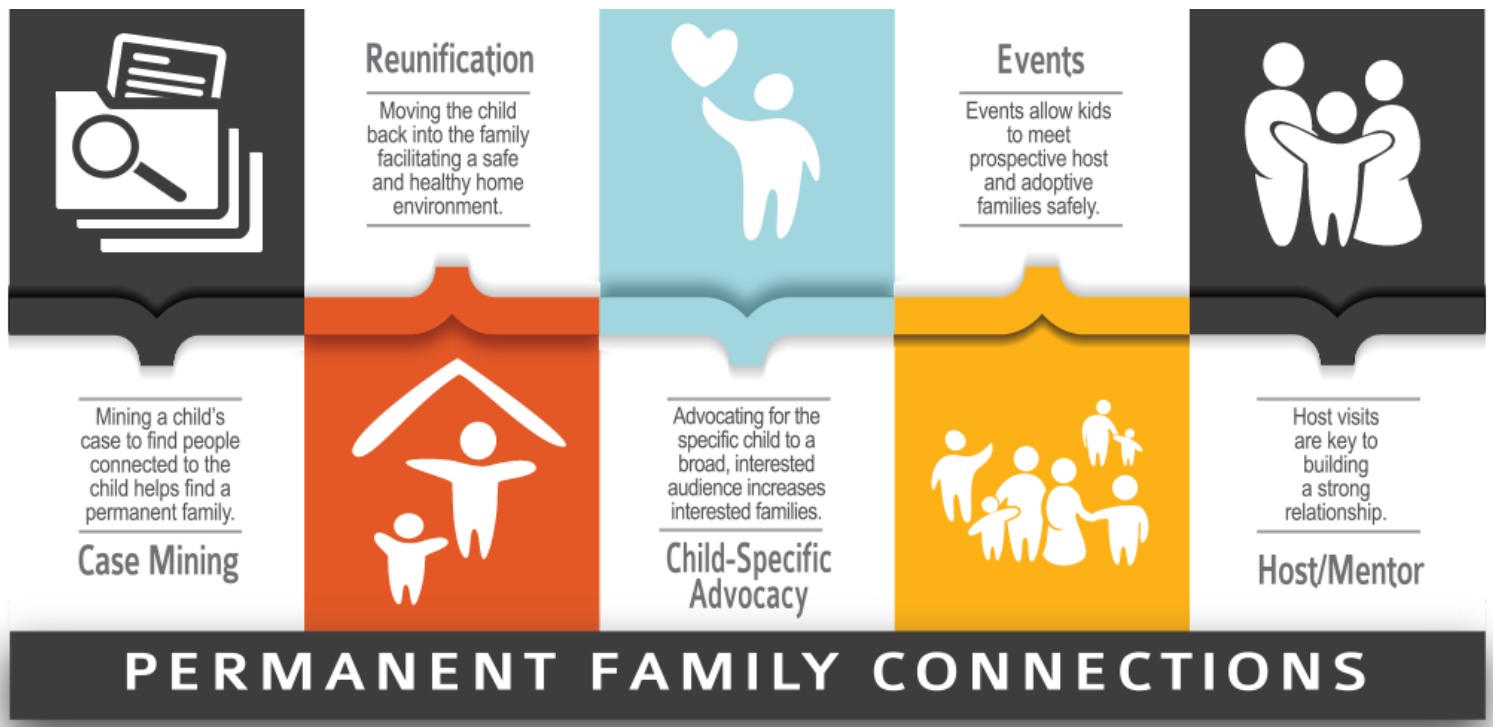
FAMILY VISIT MODEL

Older children, ages 9 to 18, are considered hard-to-place. Prospective adoptive parents often look to adopt babies rather than teens and preteens, so the pool of interested families for older kids is small.

Older kids have opinions, their personalities are shaped, and many have experienced significant trauma. Working to find families for these youth is time-consuming and challenging. Consequently, a large proportion exit the child welfare system without the safety net of a family or a mentoring relationship. Without the support of caring adults, the odds are against system-involved youth graduating from high school or college, finding a good job, or having the example of a successful family life from which to build their own.

Kidsave's goal is to demonstrate and create change. Our Family Visit Model gives kids in foster care and orphanages, ages 7 through 18, short-term visits with families during school vacations and weekends. The model is unique in child welfare because it:

- welcomes people without home studies to meet kids without excessive paperwork;
- enables people to host children without committing to adopt them;
- introduces kids to others who might be open to adoption;
- provides interactive events that give children and adults a safe space to become acquainted and
- gives kids a choice in adults with whom they might want to be connected.





KIDSAVE

WEEKEND MIRACLES®

Los Angeles

Kidsave and the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) work collaboratively to find permanent homes for youth (ages 9 -18) in Los Angeles County's foster care system.

To date, Weekend Miracles® has served over 500 older foster youth in Los Angeles County; and 76% of continuing participants have been matched with a permanent family, or a connection to a caring adult. Based on the success of Weekend Miracles, Los Angeles County has changed how it recruits families for older children.

Through Weekend Miracles program, foster youth are placed with volunteer host families on weekends, so that potential families have the opportunity to get acquainted with the children. This contact allows for bonds to be created naturally -- without the pressure of having to commit to adopt before becoming acquainted. The goal is to find each child an adoptive family.

We encourage use of our Family Visit Model in organizations across the U.S. Outside of LA, Kids in foster care can benefit from our model in Colorado, North Carolina, Texas, and Washington, DC.

www.kidsave.org/weekendmiracles

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1-888-KIDSAVE



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SUMMER MIRACLES®

Kidsave Summer Miracles® brings Colombian orphans to the United States for a four to five week summer visit. While they are here the children attend summer camp, learn about U.S. culture, and most importantly, meet prospective adoptive families. These are older children, ages 7 through 14, who have little or no chance of finding adoptive parents in their own country. During the summer visit, Kidsave staff, dedicated volunteers and host families work diligently to find adoptive families for these children. Since 1999, more than 1,833 children have traveled to the U.S. as part of the program, and 80% have found adoptive families.



Each year Kidsave works with communities across the country to implement the Summer Miracles program. These communities consist of local families and volunteers who together commit to supporting the program for four to five weeks during the summer. Community volunteers host, help to raise funds, organize events, advocate for each host child's adoption through community and media outreach, and secure support services for the children, including medical, translation, and more.



Kidsave provides training and support to participating host families. We collaborate with social workers, adoption agencies, child welfare advocates and government officials to find safe, appropriate families for Colombian children.

www.kidsave.org/summer-miracles



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SIERRA LEONE

Kidsave has been helping orphans find families in Sierra Leone since 2010. At that time, many of the children who lost family during the civil war were living in orphanages. In 2014 the Ebola epidemic swept through Sierra Leone bringing devastation and impoverishment. The epidemic made children's precarious situation even worse, leaving 8,624 children registered as Ebola orphans. As the confusion and danger of Ebola descended, Kidsave ramped up and focused on moving children out of Ebola interim care centers and orphanages and into families.



Long after the civil war and Ebola epidemic, thousands of uncounted children remain in institutions. This is the case in spite of many institutionalized children having living parents and kin willing to give them a home. Without families, children do not thrive. Kidsave's goal is to support government and citizen involvement in support of these children and to help Sierra Leone rebuild their culture of children growing up in families.

Kidsave works in concert with governments who are supportive of family care. Kidsave helps organizations support families so that children remain connected and the organization's become sustainable. We provide training and financial support to partners in Sierra Leone who collaborate with their governments to identify and reunify children with members of their biological families. Kidsave works to make sure that children who move from institutions into orphanages are successful in their new homes. Social workers and para-professionals provide support to these families. And for those who need extra assistance, Kidsave offers micro-loans to help them make ends meet.



**TO HELP KIDSAVE INVEST
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UKRAINE

Ukraine is implementing an Institutional Childcare System Reform Strategy to deinstitutionalize approximately 106,000 children who live in full-time and long-term facilities. Moving these children into family-based care is challenging as many of the kids are disabled, older, and part of sibling groups.

Kidsave supports this effort and is working as part of the Ukraine Deinstitutionalization Reform Group organized by the Ombudsman for Children. Kidsave's focus is to use the Family Visit Model to support older children and teens, ages 7-17, transition into families through adoption, guardianship, and long-term foster care. When family placement cannot be made, Kidsave supports long-term mentoring of institutionalized youth.

Kidsave is implementing a pilot in Kherson and Mykolaiv to test the model among 35 children over a period of 12 to 18 months. Working with three local partners, Kidsave is working to develop systems whereby social workers and citizens collaborate to move children into families. Our partners include:

--**The International Leadership and Development Center (ILDC)** who adapted the Family Visit Model to the Ukrainian context. They will also support training of professionals and lay partners.

--**Moi Dom**, a child-serving NGO in Kherson is leading the implementation.

--**Ukraine Without Orphans** who will support family recruitment, hosting and advocacy through the faith-based community.

Mentoring Makes a Difference!

Kidsave is a co-founder of the National Mentoring Association in Ukraine. Its goal is to provide an institutional foundation for connecting older, at-risk youth with caring adults and high-quality mentoring relationships. For children who have no adult connections, mentors can help put them on track for education and employment. Kidsave operates the Employment Pathways to Success Program supporting individual and corporate mentoring. This program helps Ukrainian orphans and at-risk youth develop workforce readiness, improve economic self-proficiency, and find internships and job opportunities.



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