



PRESS RELEASE
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Two Los Angeles Child Welfare Agencies Announce Intent to Merge

(PASADENA, CA, April 15, 2016)—On April 14, the boards of directors of HillSides and Bienvenidos signed a Memorandum of Understanding and Term Sheet stating their intent to merge. Several developments over the past four years have prompted these two leading child welfare agencies in Southern California to explore an affiliation with one another, consolidate missions to leverage their success, and increase their collective impact.

HillSides provides high quality care, advocacy, and innovative services that promote safe, permanent environments where children and youth can thrive. Headquartered in Pasadena, the agency serves more than 6,240 children and families in Los Angeles County throughout its 26 sites, including school-based mental health offices in Los Angeles, Pasadena, and Baldwin Park Unified School Districts.

Bienvenidos is a compassionate community of care dedicated to healing children, strengthening families, and transforming communities. Serving 7,000 children and families annually, the agency operates its programs out of nine locations in East Los Angeles and San Gabriel Valley. This includes licensed foster homes that serve Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino and Riverside Counties.

The developments driving this merger are the Continuum of Care Reform legislation (AB 403), the Affordable Care Act, the integration of Los Angeles County's health and behavioral health services, and the creation of the Nonprofit Sustainability Initiative by Los Angeles area foundations to encourage increased collaboration.

In particular, AB 403, which took effect in January, 2016 calls for a spectrum of services to accelerate the path to permanency for children in foster care, whether through successful reunification or, when appropriate, adoption.

“Access to a comprehensive array of services requires greater levels of collaboration among children's service providers,” says Joseph M. Costa, HillSides CEO. “To enhance our service delivery system and respond to these external factors, the leadership of HillSides and Bienvenidos began discussions last fall to look for ways to achieve cost-effective synergy, and this led to the intent to merge.”

Both Hillsides and Bienvenidos will retain their individual names with Bienvenidos becoming an affiliate of Hillsides.

According to Bienvenidos President and CEO Ritchie L. Geisel, the agencies' combined resources and workforce of 600 will increase their impact in Los Angeles and surrounding counties. Together, the enhanced services will empower children, youth, and families who have experienced trauma to create lasting changes in their lives. "Our clients' resilience and resolve to improve their lives inspire us every day to further our collective mission," Geisel says.

The leadership of both agencies recognizes their similar missions and complementary programs are well suited for a merger. Combined with the additional programs each brings to the table, this merger helps them align with current legislation, public policy, and best practice models.

"Together we will be able to fulfill our shared vision and provide leadership during this paradigm shift in child welfare," said Costa, adding that their common set of values will enable them to continue serving the needs of more than 13,000 children, youth, and families, collectively.

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