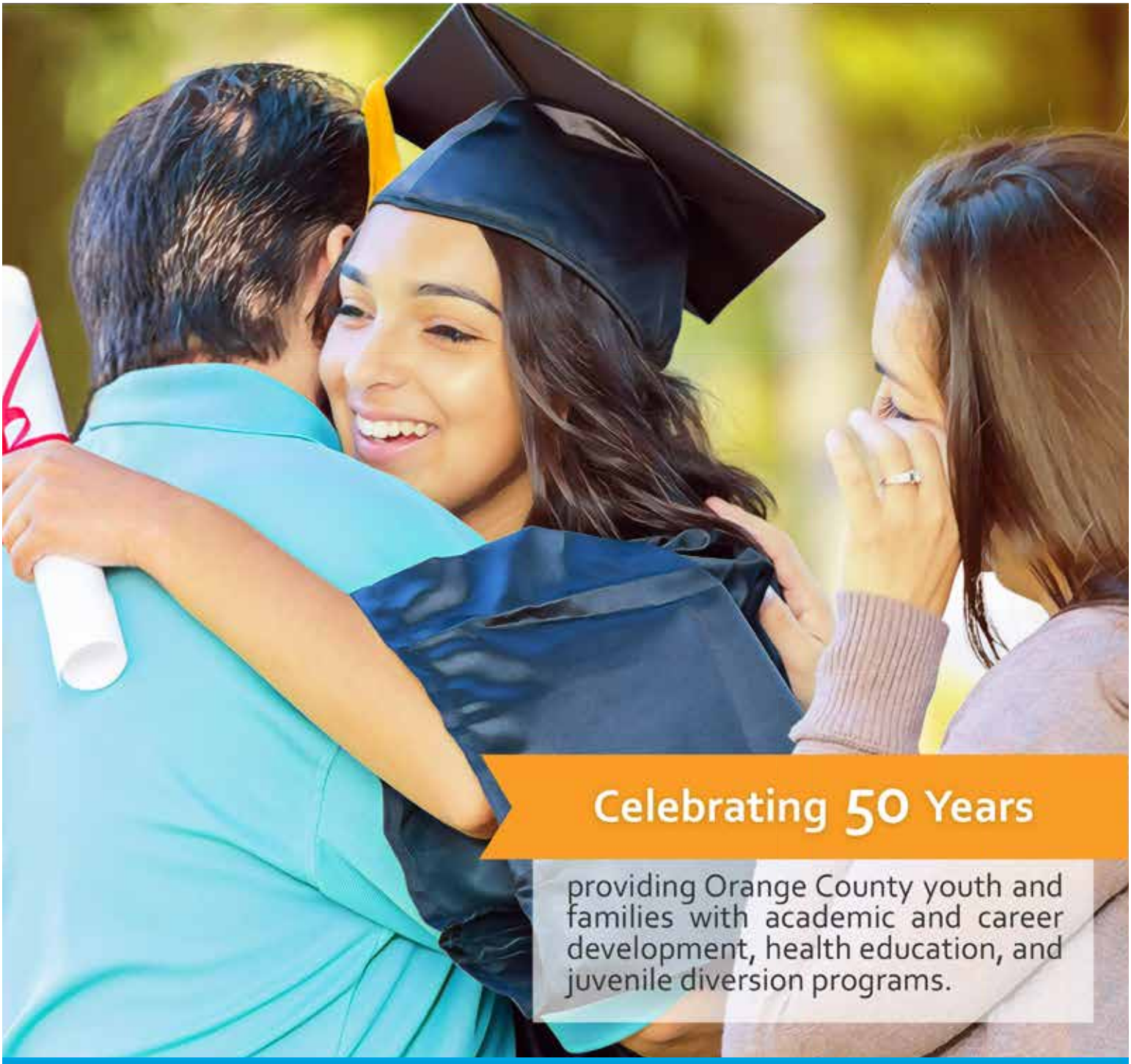
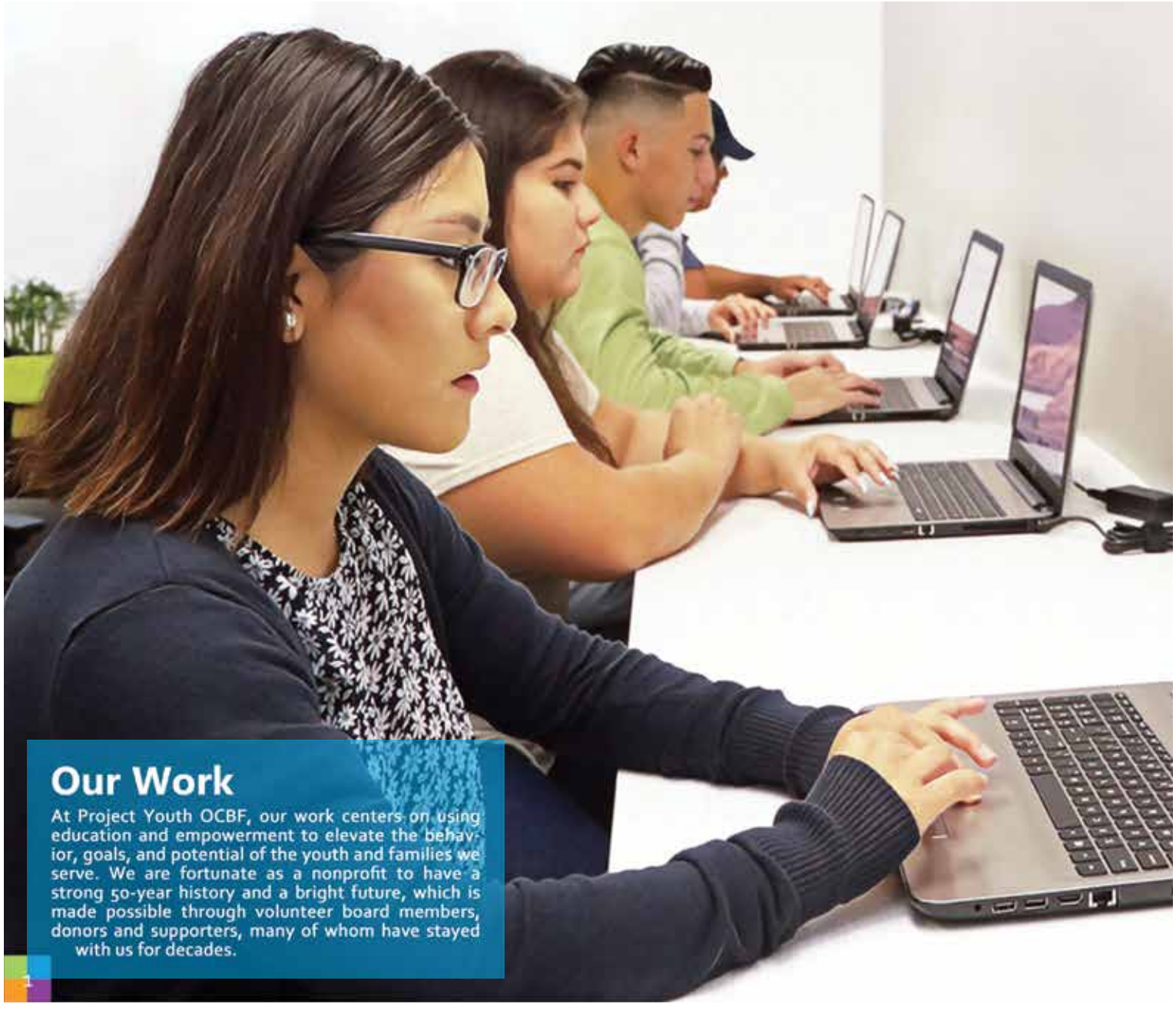
Elevate Educate Empower

Campaign for Project Youth OCBF



Case for Support



Our Work

At Project Youth OCBF, our work centers on using education and empowerment to elevate the behavior, goals, and potential of the youth and families we serve. We are fortunate as a nonprofit to have a strong 50-year history and a bright future, which is made possible through volunteer board members, donors and supporters, many of whom have stayed with us for decades.

Project Youth OCBF's programs create a ***comprehensive****, family- centered system of care that is tailored specifically for low-income, at-risk, and minority youth.*

All services are culturally and linguistically appropriate for our target population.

The Higher Education Mentoring Program provides local, disadvantaged high school students with the academic, social, and financial support needed to graduate from high school, earn their college degree, and successfully enter the workforce.

Project SELF (Summer Employment in Law Firms) offers paid, eight-week summer internships at local law firms, and law-related businesses, to low-income and minority Santa Ana youth.

SHORTSTOP is a unique juvenile crime diversion program that has served at-risk youth and their families since 1980. It offers an evidence-based, cost-effective alternative to prosecution for first-time youth offenders.

Based on our successful SHORTSTOP model, **STOP SHORT of Addiction** is an intensive, state-certified alcohol and drug intervention designed to address the needs of first-time juvenile offenders in the early stages of substance abuse.

Madres Unidas (Mothers United) provides Latina mothers with sexual health education and HIV/STI risk-reduction services to foster healthy and safe behaviors and positive family functioning.

Youth Making Proud Choices provides health education services to local youth to prevent STIs, HIV, and teen pregnancy.

New Permanent Home of Project Youth OCBF
1605 E. 17th Street, Santa Ana

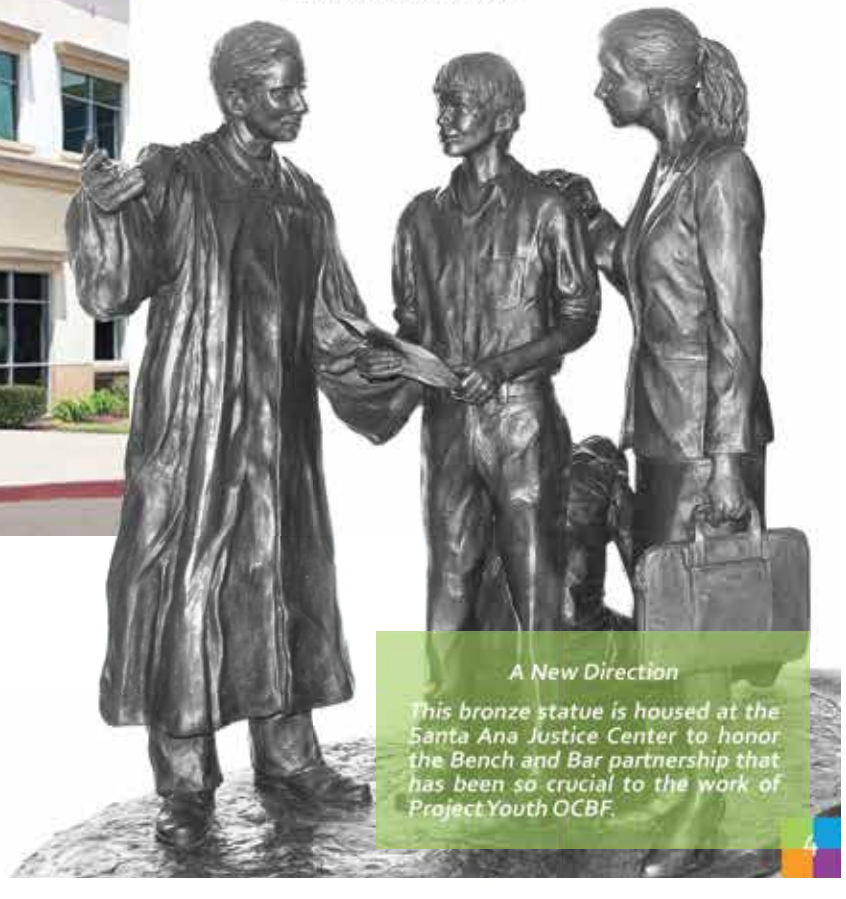
Since 1969, Project Youth OCBF (known to many as the Orange County Bar Foundation) has worked shoulder to shoulder with thousands of local families to keep at-risk youth in school, healthy and drug-free. For the last fifty years, we have provided a one-stop center for family-based education, health, prevention and intervention programs. By offering education, counseling, mentoring, and family strengthening services, we are able to provide valuable comprehensive programs which meet community needs and impact families for the better.

We provide programs that prepare students to successfully enroll in and complete college, as well as hands on professional work experience. Our health programs teach youth and parents how to live healthier lives, including preventing teen pregnancy and HIV/STIs. We tackle juvenile delinquency and substance abuse head on by giving at-risk youth a second chance to get back on the right track.

About Project Youth OCBF

Project Youth OCBF is based in Santa Ana and serves 1,500 at-risk Orange County youth, ages 12-18, and over 1,000 parents each year. Our agency has been built upon a legacy deep within the local legal community. Initially, Project Youth OCBF was established as the philanthropic arm of the Orange County Bar Association. Due to the success and growth of our work supporting at-risk youth, Project Youth OCBF became an independent non-profit agency in 1981.

Since then, we have continued to provide direct services, while expanding our capacity to serve more local youth and families. Our goal has remained the same, to reach at-risk youth early and provide long-term solutions to the obstacles they face.



A New Direction

This bronze statue is housed at the Santa Ana Justice Center to honor the Bench and Bar partnership that has been so crucial to the work of Project Youth OCBF.

Our Community

"From my 32 years of service as a lawyer, judge and arbitrator, I have seen firsthand the challenges that face the youth in the heart of Orange County, and also the real difference that Project Youth OCBF makes in their lives."

– The Honorable Judith Ryan (Retired), Campaign Co-Chair

Orange County has become iconic for its wealth and upscale beach communities. Yet many of its cities are crippled by high poverty rates, crime and gang activity.

Academic Achievement Gap

Only 55% of the adults in Santa Ana over the age of 25 have a high school diploma. Of the Santa Ana high school students we serve, 92% are the first in their family to go to college, and for many, the first to graduate from high school.

Teen Health

Current research shows over the past five years there has been a 412% increase in youth syphilis cases, a 204% increase in gonorrhea cases, and a 59% increase in chlamydia cases in Orange County.

Youth Crime and Substance Abuse

When youth use alcohol and drugs, they are much more likely to engage in delinquent behavior. Once youth have come in contact with the juvenile justice system, they have a significantly greater chance of being incarcerated as adults. In Orange County, 69% of juvenile probationers go on to break the law again.

Experts from sociology to economists agree that poverty, crime, health disparities, and low educational attainment are intimately connected. Project Youth OCBF aggressively tackles these issues. In doing so, we not only strengthen local youth and families, but the fabric of our community.

SHORTSTOP Instructor with youth and parents

Our Impact

Academic and Career Advancement

"Project Youth OCBF not only has a good story to tell, it has a great reality to tell. There is real and significant impact being made all the time."

– Jim and Linda Skorheim, Campaign Co-Chairs

Health Education

Increased knowledge of HIV/AIDS and STI risk factors.

Improved sexual communication and negotiation skills.

Increased access to HIV/STI testing and other local sexual health and substance abuse services.

Youth Diversion

93% of the youth that complete SHORTSTOP and STOP SHORT of Addiction are successfully diverted from the legal system for at least a year (based on recidivism studies conducted by the Orange County Probation Department).

93% of our STOP SHORT of Addiction youth remain drug-free for at least six months after program completion drug-free for at least six months after program completion.

100% of our high school seniors enroll in college.

100% of our college students complete their freshman year with passing grades.

75% of our college students complete their bachelor's degree, compared with the 20% college completion rate of Latinos in California.

College graduates are advancing to the workforce and contributing to the local economy.

Below: Pillar Higher Education Mentoring Program graduate. Currently attending Chapman University.

Opposite Page: Maron Project SELF, SHORTSTOP and Youth Making Proud Choices graduate. Attending Santa Ana College and working part-time at Project Youth OCBF.

"I have 12 siblings. We often struggle with basic necessities and sometimes there is not enough food to last the week. My parents didn't graduate from high school, so they don't know anything about going to college. Parent participation was a big part of the Higher Education Mentoring Program. My parents attended workshops with me so they could understand the college application process. They became much more supportive of my academic goals. The Higher Education Mentoring Program introduced me to the world outside of high school and prepared me for my place in it. The program guided me every step of the way through the college application and financial aid process. It provided every resource possible so that I could take control of my future."

— Higher Education Mentoring Program Participant

The Higher Education Mentoring Program 2017 High School Graduates

"We have been fortunate to be involved with several wonderful organizations in Orange County, but Project Youth OCBF has a special place in our hearts. We invite you to join us to do more for at-risk youth."

– Al and Cindy Stokke, Campaign Co-Chairs

Our campaign is fittingly named Elevate Educate Empower

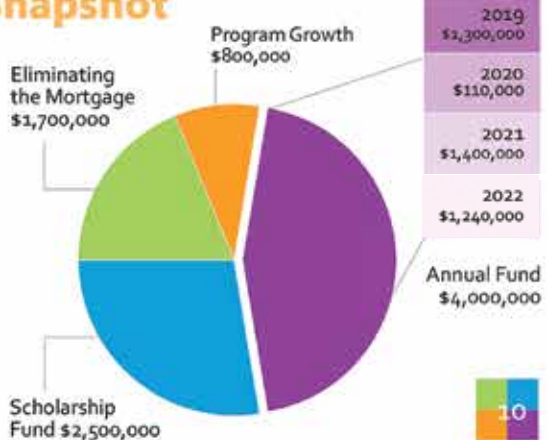
...which not only reflects the increased **trajectory** of the lives we impact, but also the ever-increasing standard of excellence we set for our agency.

For 50 years, Project Youth OCBF has made a significant and meaningful impact in the lives of at-risk youth and families. The tens of thousands of clients we've served represent an incalculable benefit to both local families and the broader community. Our work is essential today and will remain essential far in to the future.

As we celebrate half a century impacting the lives of Orange County youth and families, we desire to make an even larger footprint in the community. Over the next four years, Project Youth OCBF will embark on a major campaign effort with a goal of securing $9 million in public and private support through a comprehensive campaign that will be invested in **three specific areas *and increase our annual fund***.

We have identified the investments that enable us to fulfill our vision for the next fifty years and beyond. These investments will position us to serve thousands more youth and families each and every year.

$9 Million Campaign Snapshot



Program Support ($800,000)

Project Youth OCBF generates approximately $1.3 million in annual program operating support. These funds are the lifeblood of our organization and we must not only sustain this revenue, but we must grow it over the next three years. On top of current fundraising, we seek to raise an additional $800,000 in philanthropic support to expand our programs, create greater efficacy, and improve outcomes. Through increased program support through private philanthropy, we can expand our clinical department to provide family counseling at no cost through our evidenced-based brief strategic family therapy. We can up to double Project SELF participants over a five year period with the coordination of new employment partnerships. And we can sustain 600 students served annually through Youth Making Proud Choices when funding from federal grant support ends.

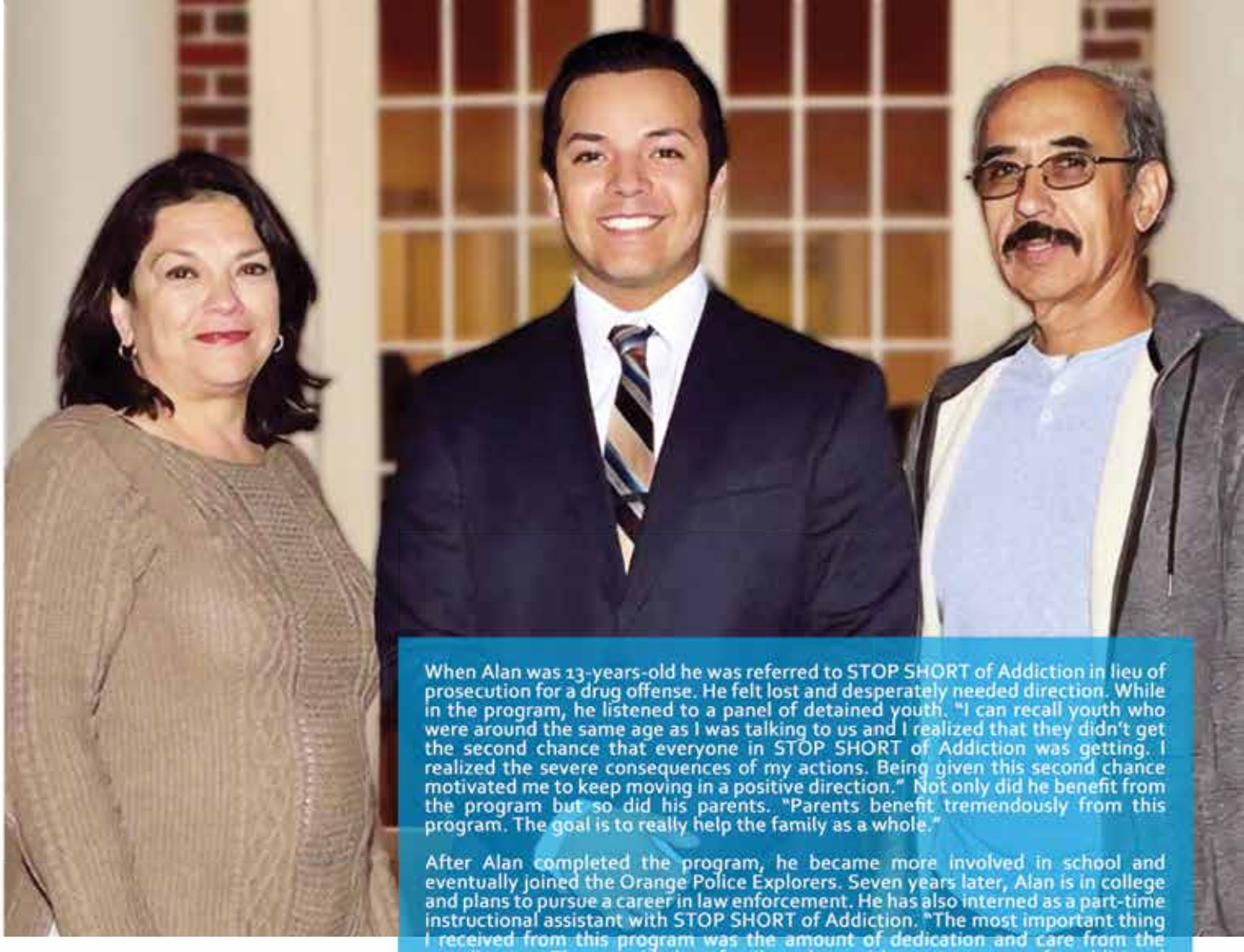
Scholarship Endowment ($2.5 million)

Project Youth OCBF prepares at-risk youth to enter and successfully complete college, yet these students are often the least able to afford tuition. Providing college scholarships to keep our students from going deeper into debt and to seek higher education opportunities is a top priority.

Eliminating the Mortgage on Our Home ($1.7 million)

Project Youth OCBF recently made the important investment of purchasing a permanent home for our organization. The mortgage balance on our home is $1.7 million, which we aim to eliminate as quickly as possible to unleash $90,000 each year for our programs that would otherwise be spent on interest payments to the bank. Life change happens inside the walls of our building. All of our educational, health and diversion life-changing programs and classes take place throughout the week in our Santa Ana home.

Our goal is to create a special endowed scholarship fund of $2.5 million. This would allow us to offer $120,000 in renewable scholarships to dozens of our students annually, as well as provide scholarships regardless of economic conditions or fundraising success.



When Alan was 13-years-old he was referred to STOP SHORT of Addiction in lieu of prosecution for a drug offense. He felt lost and desperately needed direction. While in the program, he listened to a panel of detained youth. "I can recall youth who were around the same age as I was talking to us and I realized that they didn't get the second chance that everyone in STOP SHORT of Addiction was getting. I realized the severe consequences of my actions. Being given this second chance motivated me to keep moving in a positive direction." Not only did he benefit from the program but so did his parents. "Parents benefit tremendously from this program. The goal is to really help the family as a whole."

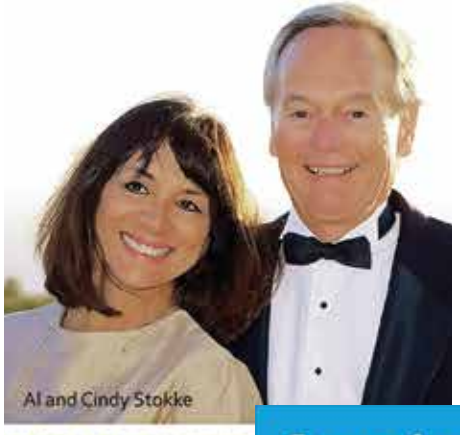
After Alan completed the program, he became more involved in school and eventually joined the Orange Police Explorers. Seven years later, Alan is in college and plans to pursue a career in law enforcement. He has also interned as a part-time instructional assistant with STOP SHORT of Addiction. "The most important thing I received from this program was the amount of dedication and care from the coordinators. They provided my family and me with great resources for additional help, and continued to follow up with me long after I had finished the program. Being an intern helped me to not only develop career skills, but gave me the opportunity to help and mentor youth who are in trouble just like I was."

– Alan, STOP SHORT of Addiction past participant and current instructional assistant, with his parents

Project Youth OCBF 50th Year Celebration

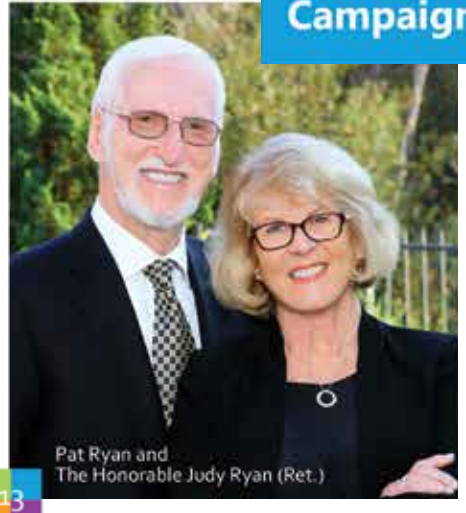
Honorary Chairs

Ygal Sonenshine and
The Honorable Sheila
Prell Sonenshine (Ret.)



Al and Cindy Stokke

Campaign Co-Chairs



Pat Ryan and
The Honorable Judy Ryan (Ret.)

Jim and
Linda Skorheim

Lives Changed

"My parents emigrated from Oaxaca to Santa Ana over 25 years ago. Growing up in Santa Ana, I experienced first-hand the pressing social issues, homelessness, and over-policing in my community. I saw many of my peers become victims of drug abuse and the school-to-prison pipeline.

"I began my journey with Project Youth OC BF when I participated in Project SELF, a paid summer internship program. I interned at O'Melveny & Myers, where I gained my first experience in the corporate legal field. Soon after, I was accepted into the Higher Education Mentoring Program. During my time in the program, I had a mentor that guided me through every step of the college application process. I attended workshops and gained assistance with scholarships and the SAT, as well as my personal and academic development.

"Thanks to Project Youth OCBF, I was able to get accepted to UC Berkeley with scholarships and financial aid. During my second year at Berkeley, I was appointed to sit on a Police Oversight Commission for the City of Berkeley which worked to create policies addressing racial profiling and police accountability. I was also elected to serve on the student senate, serving as a point of contact for underrepresented students on campus. My leadership experiences played a large role in my development as an individual passionate about changing the world.

"I've now returned to Santa Ana to help solve the systemic issues I experienced in my youth. I am proud to return as a volunteer for Project Youth OCBF to give back and continue to help my community."

Jim Skorheim
with Bulmaro
2017 UC Berkeley Graduate