

FRIENDS of the CHILDREN

Generational Change,
One Child at a Time

SF Bay Area

April 6, 2022

Office of Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

Friends of the Children – SF Bay Area (Friends SF) is a unique, evidence-based mentoring organization that hires salaried, professional mentors to provide consistent, caring adult support for children who face the biggest systemic barriers, from kindergarten through high school graduation, as they break the generational cycle of poverty.

We opened our doors in the Bayview community in 2017 and have grown to serve 110 children, well on the way to our goal of serving 400. Our model has been employed at other Friends of the Children chapters for nearly 30 years and has an unparalleled track record of success.

In the attached request form, Friends SF is seeking Community Project Funding of \$1 million, to be applied toward the \$1.3 million cost of purchasing and renovating the Bayview building in which we currently rent space. The remainder of that cost will be covered by the proceeds of a grant we received recently through the City's Nonprofit Stabilization Initiative.

Purchasing this building will increase our program space significantly, enabling us to continue our growth toward serving 400 children. The project will also provide room for active mentor/child outings and a computer lab – both of which are critical to our program goals now that our oldest children are entering middle school. The new space will facilitate large staff, family and community meetings. Finally, purchasing our building will reduce our future operating costs and protect our program from the vagaries of the San Francisco rental market.

The City of San Francisco has made a commendable commitment to slowing the exodus of Black and Brown children, and to providing more support to our most system-impacted families. Friends SF is committed to those same goals. 90% of the children in our program identify as Black or Latinx and live below the poverty line, and we select each of those children because they face immense systemic barriers – precisely the demographic the City has vowed to support.

I am attaching our FY23 Community Project Funding Request, along with letters of support from:

- Reverend Cecil Williams
- SF Board of Supervisors President Shamann Walton
- Former SF City Attorney Louise Renne.

Thank you for considering our request for funding. Please let me know if you or your staff have any questions.

Respectfully,

Michael Rugen

Michael Rugen
Co-Founder & Executive Director

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SENATOR
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威善高

ELEVENTH SENATE DISTRICT



ASSISTANT MAJORITY WHIP
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VICE CHAIR
MENTAL HEALTH CAUCUS
CHAIR
COMMITTEES:
HOUSING
CHAIR
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HEALTH
JUDICIARY
PUBLIC SAFETY
LEGISLATIVE ETHICS
CHAIR
SELECT COMMITTEE ON
MENTAL HEALTH & ADDICTION
CHAIR

April 19, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

I am writing in support of the request by Friends of the Children – SF Bay Area (Friends SF) for \$1 million in funding to purchase their current headquarters.

I have known Friends-SF's co-founder and executive director Michael Rugen since we both practiced law at a large San Francisco firm, and I have watched with interest as Friends-SF has evolved after opening their doors in 2017. Friends-SF serves children who live in and around the Bayview Hunters Point community, one of the most underserved communities in San Francisco. Friends-SF identifies and enrolls children who are facing the greatest obstacles into their professional mentoring program.

Friends SF's hiring of professional mentors, their K through 12 commitment to each child, and their evidence-based approach provide a powerful model for helping those children overcome the immense challenges they face. The model's track record of empowering children to break the generational cycle of poverty speaks for itself. In fact, the children served by Friends SF need their mentors more than ever because the COVID pandemic has only widened the economic and academic gap between them and their more affluent peers.

I have been impressed by Friends SF's ability to grow so quickly to serve 110 children in my district and I applaud their plan to eventually serve 400. In light of that growth, I appreciate the need for Friends SF to find additional space and I know how difficult it is to find suitable rental properties in the Bayview district. Purchasing 111 Quint Street will enable Friends SF to double their usable space, reduce their operating costs, and establish a permanent space for Bayview children who face the biggest barriers.

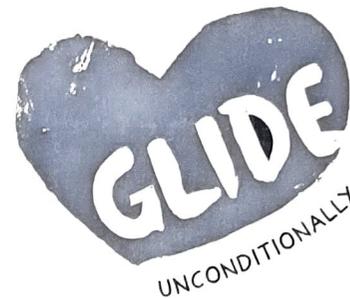
I am delighted to support Friends SF's request for \$1 million in funding to purchase a new headquarters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott Wiener".

Scott Wiener
Senator, 11th District

Office of Senator Diane Feinstein
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510



Office of Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Feinstein and Speaker Pelosi:

As you know, I am the Co-Founder of GLIDE, which has been serving San Francisco's most vulnerable citizens for more than 50 years. GLIDE's mission is to create a radically inclusive, just and loving community mobilized to alleviate suffering and break the cycles of poverty and marginalization.

My late wife and Co-Founder Janice Mirikitani and I became members of the board of directors of Friends of the Children – SF Bay Area when it was incorporated in 2016, and I have remained on the board ever since. We agreed to serve on the board because Friends SF shares the same values as GLIDE. Friends of the Children is the only organization we know that actively searches for and enrolls the children most at risk of becoming involved with the juvenile justice system, dropping out of school or becoming teen parents. At GLIDE, we have been serving a similar population – the most vulnerable children and their families – for more than half a century and we can testify that these children need Friends of the Children desperately. Too often they live in underserved, crime-infested communities, and family factors such as drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence and parental incarceration exacerbate these problems. Interventions that start when a child is in middle or high school and/or stay with the child for only a brief period are often insufficient to keep these children from entering the school-to-prison pipeline or otherwise continuing the destructive cycles into which they were born.

Friends of the Children's one-on-one approach, their hiring of professional mentors and their K through 12 commitment to each child provide a powerful model for helping those children overcome the immense systemic challenges they face. The model's track record speaks for itself. For nearly 30 years, that model has been empowering children to change their stories and break the generational cycle of poverty.

As a Board member, I am also aware that Friends of the Children has grown from 0 to 110 children since moving into our current headquarters, and that additional space is badly needed. Purchasing the building will provide that additional space and ensure that the organization will not need to contend with the ever-appreciating San Francisco rental market.

I am proud of the role that Janice and I played in bringing Friends of the Children to San Francisco, proud of the work the organization is doing, and proud to support this request for funding to establish a permanent home in Bayview Hunters Point.

Sincerely,

Reverend Cecil Williams

Co-Founder & Pastor Emeritus

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www.glide.org

Office of Senator Diane Feinstein
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Office of Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Feinstein and Speaker Pelosi:

I am a former member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors and former General Counsel for the San Francisco Unified School District. I also served for 16 years as City Attorney for the City and County of San Francisco. Prior to that I was California Deputy Attorney General for 11 years. I am now a founding partner of Renne Public Law Group, which specializes in representing plaintiff coalitions of government agencies, individuals and non-profit organizations. I am frequently requested to conduct impartial investigations for local public agencies in high-profile matters.

I am submitting this letter in support of Friends of the Children – SF Bay Area’s request for \$1 million of funding toward purchase of a permanent headquarters in the Bayview district. Throughout my career, I have been involved at various levels with a number of government agencies and nonprofit organizations that focused on supporting at-risk children. I became aware of Friends of the Children nearly 20 years ago and was immediately impressed with the organization’s mission (to support children who face the biggest systemic barriers) and its model (hiring professional mentors to support those children from kindergarten through high school graduation). I have watched the organization grow nationally over the ensuing years and I have become convinced that taking mentoring out of the volunteer realm, starting as early as possible, and committing to stay for the long run are all essential to supporting children who face such daunting barriers.

I was therefore thrilled when I learned that a chapter of Friends of the Children would be opening in San Francisco. I assisted Co-Founder & Executive Director Michael Rugen in raising seed funds for Friends SF and have served as an informal advisor to Michael ever since. I recently agreed to join the organization’s newly-formed Advisory Circle, so that I could stay in touch with and offer more formal input on developments at the organization. I continue to believe -- and the organization’s independently verified track record demonstrates -- that the Friends of the Children model provides the best opportunity for the most at-risk children to break the generational cycle of poverty.

I am aware that the City of San Francisco has been working recently with members of the public and private sectors to stem the exodus of Black families from San Francisco, and to provide added support to the families most affected by systemic racism. Given the demographic of children and families that Friends SF serves, and the indisputably successful track record of their

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mentoring model, I am confident that Friends SF can and will play a critical role in the pursuing those objectives.

I also know that Friends SF has grown significantly since moving into their current headquarters in 2017, from 0 children and 3 employees to 110 children and 23 employees, so I fully appreciate their need for additional space. I know how space constraints can stifle the effectiveness and growth of any organization and I know how difficult it is to find suitable rental properties in the Bayview district.

For all of those reasons, I fully support Friends SF's request for funding, which will enable the organization to establish a permanent home in the Bayview district and continue evolving toward its goal of serving 400 children.

Thank you for considering my input.

Sincerely,



Louise Renne

Office of Congresswoman Speaker Nancy Pelosi
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Tuesday, April 5, 2022

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

I am President of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, and the Supervisor for District 10, where Friends of the Children – SF Bay Area (Friends SF) and the children it serves are located. I am writing in support of Friends SF's request for \$1,000,000 of funding to support its purchase of 111 Quint Street.

I am a native of San Francisco, raised by a single mother in the city's public housing communities. My mother and I moved to Vallejo, California when I was eleven, where I graduated from Vallejo Senior High School in 1993. I attended Morris Brown College in Atlanta, where I was involved with the Model United Nations and Organization of African Unity Debate teams, selected to Who's Who Among Students in American Colleges and Universities, elected Student Government Association Internal Vice President, and graduated cum laude.

I then moved back to San Francisco where I began teaching and working at the Boys and Girls Club. I eventually became the Director of the Economic Opportunity Council of San Francisco's Potrero Hill Family Resource Center (PHFRC), where I managed and developed programs for families with children from 0 to 14, then a program officer for the San Francisco Department of Children, Youth and Their Families (DCYF).

While with DCYF, I completed my master's degree in public administration at San Francisco State University. I then became the Executive Director of Young Community Developers, Inc., a workforce development agency located in Bayview Hunters Point. I also served as President of the San Francisco Unified School District Board of Education. I was elected to the Board of Supervisors in 2018 and became its President in 2019.

Having grown up in a challenged community without a father actively involved in my life, I recognize the critical role that supportive mentors can play in the life of a child. My mother was a tremendous support throughout my childhood, but I was also lucky enough to find a series of adult males who took me under their wing, encouraged me and taught me the life lessons I needed to learn. Without those mentors, I doubt I could have avoided the paths many of my friends took: dropping out of school, getting involved in drugs and/or landing in prison. Thanks to those mentors' support, I stayed in school, graduated college with honors and now have the ability to give back to my community.

In my government and non-profit work, I've seen similar things. Too many of our children live in underserved, crime-infested communities. Where family factors such as drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence and parental incarceration create additional hurdles, it becomes extremely difficult for those children to escape the generational cycle of poverty. I'm convinced that one of the few effective ways of helping them change their life trajectories is to provide a consistent, supportive adult in their lives.

I became aware in 2016 of the efforts of Co-Founder & Executive Director Michael Rugen to found a chapter of Friends of the Children in San Francisco, and I was immediately impressed with the organization. I accompanied several other community leaders to Portland, Oregon in 2017, to see the oldest and largest Friends of the Children chapter in action. During that trip, we met with the principal of an elementary school that has partnered with Friends of the Children for many years, who told us that

Friends of the Children was the best community-based organization she had ever worked with and that her teachers clamor each year to see their most challenged students enrolled in the program.

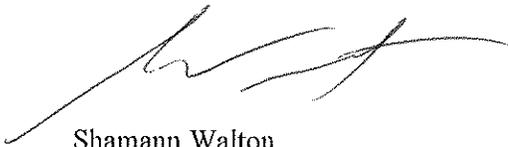
I have continued to follow the evolution of Friends SF since they began serving children in my district in 2017, and I've found that Friends-SF has been embraced similarly by their partner SFUSD schools and by others in the community. I have been impressed by their ability to grow so quickly to serve 110 of the children in my district who face the biggest systemic barriers, and I applaud their plan to serve 400.

Many groups provide support to poor children they believe have exceptional potential, but Friends of the Children is the only one I know that systematically seeks out and enrolls the children most at risk of ending up as dropouts, teen parents or prisoners. Their commitment to start with each child in kindergarten and stay with them through high school graduation is critical to working with that cohort of children, who can so easily stumble on any of the many hurdles they face at each stage of their lives. And, by hiring and training full-time, salaried, professional mentors, Friends of the Children removes the uncertainties inherent in even the best volunteer-based mentoring program. Finally, I know of no other organization that can demonstrate a remotely similar track record of successful outcomes for their children.

I have been working for years with my colleagues in government and nonprofit sectors to stem the exodus of Black families from San Francisco, and to support the families most affected by systemic racism. Friends SF has played and will continue for many years to play a critical role in our pursuit of those objectives.

As the former head of a fast-growing Bayview nonprofit, I appreciate the need for Friends SF to purchase their headquarters building at 111 Quint Street. The organization has grown significantly since opening its doors in 2017 and I know how space constraints can stifle the effectiveness and growth of an organization, especially one with a relationship-based model like Friends SF's. I also know how difficult it is to find suitable rental properties in the Bayview district. Finally, I know that Friends SF partners with a growing number of community organizations, who provide various sorts of support for the children and families in their program; their expanded space will provide a location for Friends SF to host essential meetings with their families and community partners.

I am delighted to support Friends SF's request for funding, which will enable the organization to establish a permanent home in District 10 and continue evolving into a cornerstone of our community. Please do not hesitate to contact me at shamannwalton@sbcglobal.net if you would like to discuss. Sincerely,



Shamann Walton
President, San Francisco Board of Supervisors