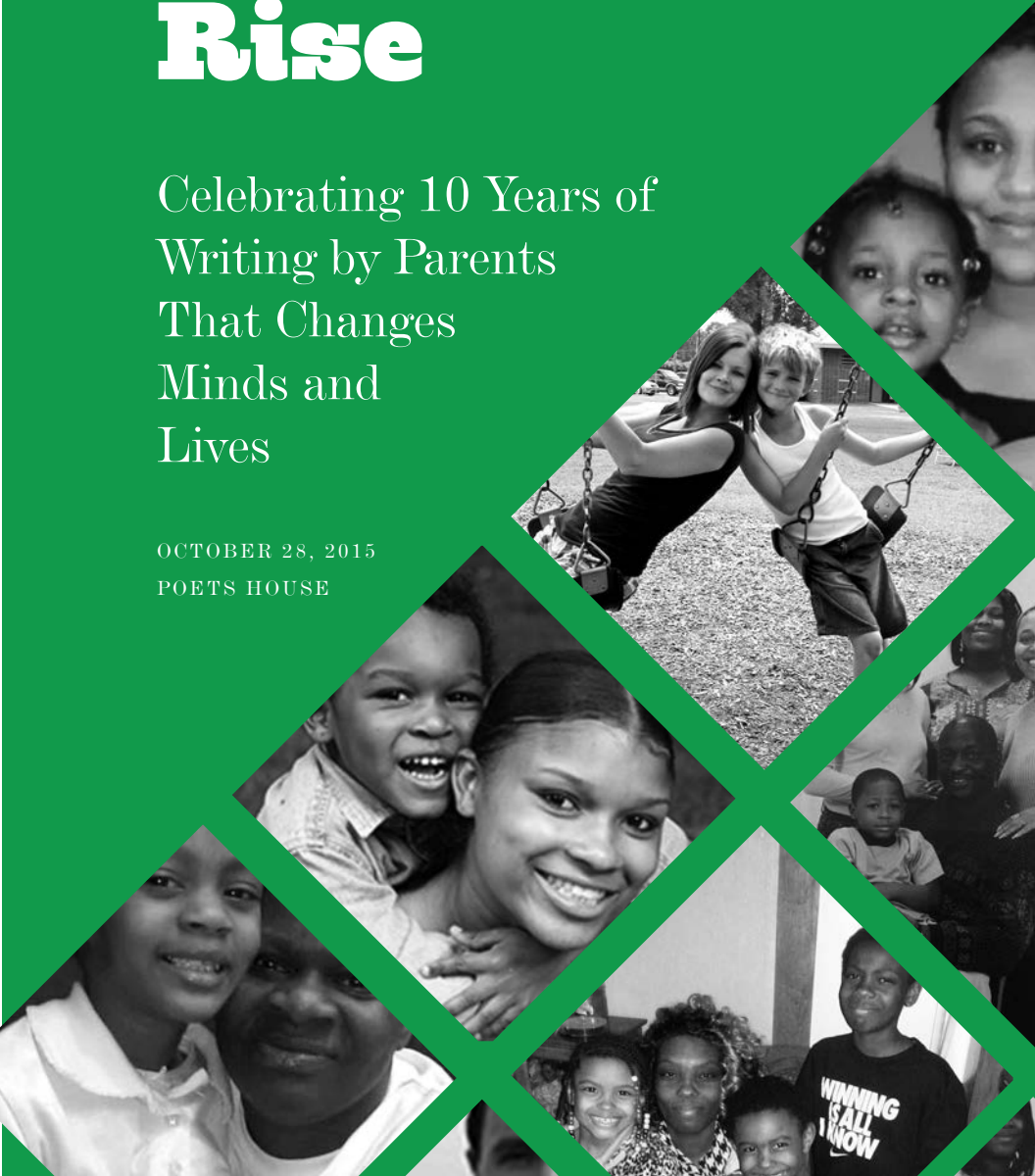


# With Every Story We Rise

Celebrating 10 Years of  
Writing by Parents  
That Changes  
Minds and  
Lives

OCTOBER 28, 2015  
POETS HOUSE



**With  
Every  
Story  
We Rise**

OCTOBER 28, 6:30

POETS HOUSE

# Speakers

**Gladys Carrión**, Commissioner, NYC Children's Services

**Anne Williams-Isom**, CEO, Harlem Children's Zone

**Piazaadora Footman and Jeanette Vega**, Rise

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and Casey Family Programs

**RISE GUARDIANS:** Jeff Gramm and Susie Heimbach, and Forestdale

**PARENT CHAMPIONS:** Lindsey Adelman, David Lansner and Carolyn  
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Rise's mission is to train parents to write and speak about their experiences with the child welfare system in order to deepen understanding of fragile families; provide information, healing and hope to parents; and guide child welfare professionals in becoming more responsive to the families and communities they serve.

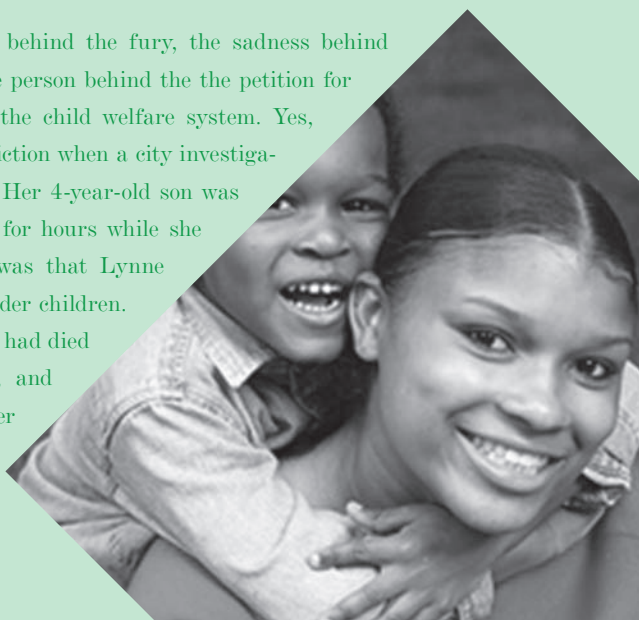
## Dear Supporters,

Thank you for celebrating 10 years with us! In June 2005, after four years of running writing workshops with parents affected by the child welfare system, we published our first edition of *Rise* magazine.

That issue focused on visits. Parents' stories described how they made the most of the one or two hours each week they were allowed to spend with their children, usually in a small, crowded room at a foster care agency, with a caseworker looking on.

Describing her first visit with her son, Lynne Miller wrote: "The worst part was when I heard my son call the foster mother 'Mom.' I flipped out. The worker and foster mom tried to reassure me that I still was and would always be his mom. But then the worker told me it would be two weeks before I would be able to see my son again, and that would be only for one hour. I was devastated."

Rise shows the pain behind the fury, the sadness behind the disconnection and the person behind the the petition for so many parents facing the child welfare system. Yes, Lynne was deep into addiction when a city investigator knocked on her door. Her 4-year-old son was watching TV by himself for hours while she got high. Less obvious was that Lynne successfully raised two older children. Her youngest son's father had died while she was pregnant, and her mother died when her son was 3. That's when



their family life fell apart. Lynne wrote: “When my mother died, a black hole opened up inside me. All the feelings I’d held back for so long came rushing back. I didn’t want to feel those feelings so I started snorting cocaine and smoking crack, too.”

Lynne overcame guilt, shame and hopelessness with the support of her son’s foster mother, a treatment program, and a parent support group. She beat her addiction and got her son home. She became a parent advocate and a dedicated Rise writer.

In 2010, Lynne wrote the introduction to a Rise policy paper on the impact of federal law on parents. It was published by the Center for the Study of Social Policy and the Urban Institute, and reprinted in the trade newspaper *Youth Today*. Then Lynne traveled to D.C. to present parents’ perspectives to congressional staffers, speaking alongside former NYC Children’s Services Commissioner John Mattingly and former federal Health and Human Services Assistant Secretary Carmen Nazario.

Lynne’s story is Rise’s story. We connect the personal to policy. We build our contributors into knowledgeable speakers and leaders. We bring parents’ expertise into the conversation.

Baltimore child welfare commissioner Molly Tierney has said: “We rely heavily on experts to guide our work, and that makes sense. It just also seems notable: One cannot be both an expert and a recipient of this intervention. But this puts us at risk of not listening to the people that might know the most about what it is we’re doing. Kids who grew up in foster care are a great example.

You know what they want? They want to go home.”

Parents who have faced child welfare have the expertise that



we need to inform and reform this system, too. They know how family crises can escalate, why families in crisis don't turn to existing supports or can't find the supports they're looking for, and what has hurt or helped them solve problems in their family lives.

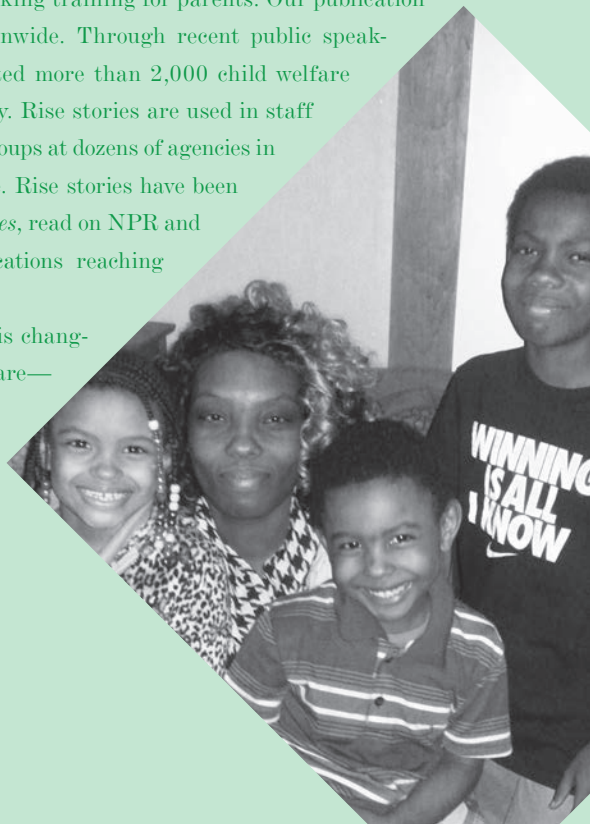
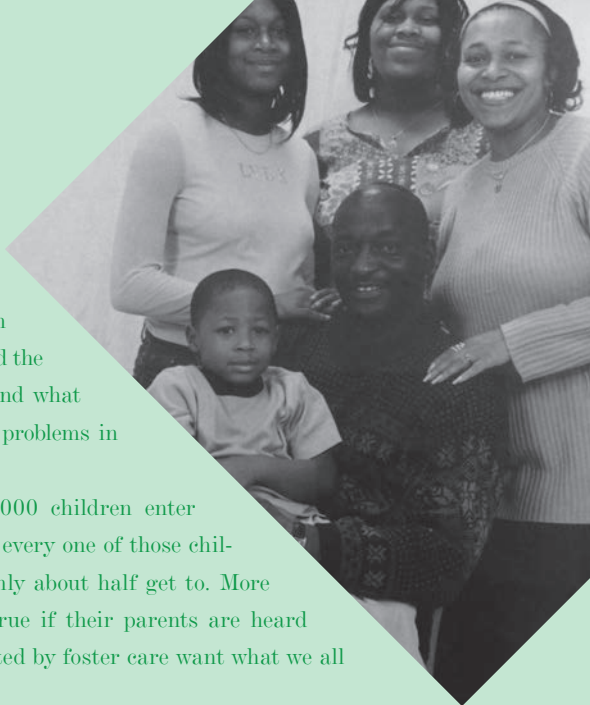
Every year almost 300,000 children enter foster care nationwide. Nearly every one of those children wants to go home, but only about half get to. More children's dreams can come true if their parents are heard and supported. Families affected by foster care want what we all want—to be stable and whole.

Now, in 2015, the guidance and insight Rise provides to parents and child welfare professionals goes beyond our magazine.. Rise runs writing workshops and public speaking training for parents. Our publication reaches 20,000 readers nationwide. Through recent public speaking, Rise parents have educated more than 2,000 child welfare professionals in New York City. Rise stories are used in staff training and parent support groups at dozens of agencies in New York City and nationwide. Rise stories have been published in *The New York Times*, read on NPR and reprinted in dozens of publications reaching child welfare professionals.

One story at a time, Rise is changing the story of who parents are—and who they can become.

Nora McCarthy

RISE DIRECTOR



# What We Do

## Writing Workshops

Rise writing workshops offer parents a safe place to reflect on their experiences, connect with peers and tell their stories. A typical workshop includes six to eight parents and meets for two hours each week for 16 weeks. Rise runs writing groups at partner agencies that already work with parents—advocacy organizations, legal providers, foster care agencies and family support programs.

## My Story, My Life Writing Workshops

Since 2012, Rise has run special writing groups for young moms ages 16 to 30 who themselves grew up in foster care. These parents are most at risk of losing their own children to foster care and need safe places to reflect and connect.

## Rise Magazine

Rise's parent-written print and online magazine ([risemagazine.org](http://risemagazine.org)) reaches 20,000 readers each year. Through reporting and personal essays, our writers provide information, guidance and hope to other parents, as well as insight to child welfare professionals.

## Parent Story Reprints

Rise stories have been printed in *The New York Times*, read on NPR, and reprinted in dozens of child welfare-related policy journals and newsletters. Rise encourages reprints and partners with other publications to produce original parent-written stories.



## **Parent Support and Education Resources**

Rise's workbooks make it easy to incorporate real parents' stories into classes and support groups. Workbooks on visiting, parent-foster parent communication, rebuilding family life after addiction or family crises, and preparing for reunification are used nationwide.

## **Rise&Shine Public Speaking Training**

Rise's new public speaking training program gives parents the tools they need to speak publicly about their experiences with the child welfare system.

## **Parent Public Presentations**

Rise's parent leaders make public presentations, speak on panels, share their stories in staff trainings and present to other parents. In the past two years, Rise presenters have reached more than 2,000 NYC child welfare professionals through public speaking.

## **Child Welfare Staff Training**

Rise partners with agencies and training providers—including Solution Based Casework, COFCCA and Satterwhite Academy—to include parent stories in training, so that frontline caseworkers and supervisors, parent and child attorneys, and foster parents can more deeply understand parents' perspectives.

*“Standing in family court almost five years ago, I felt the full stigma of child welfare involvement. The child-protective services lawyer spoke not to me but about me, as if I wasn’t even present. My faults stacked up higher than my attributes. In my community, too, I felt constantly reminded of my failure. That was truly the loneliest I have ever been. I felt less than human.”*

**NICOLE GOODWIN,**

**‘Why Is This Happening in Your Life?’**

**2014**

Most people know very little about parents in child welfare outside of the terrible stories that make the nightly news. These constant portrayals of child deaths leave most Americans under the impression that parents who have had their children removed committed horrific abuse — and deserve no compassion.

Standing in family court almost five years ago, I was one of those parents, charged with neglecting my daughter. She was 6 years old. Back then, I felt the full stigma of child welfare involvement. The child-protective services lawyer spoke not to me but about me, as if I wasn't even present. My faults stacked up higher than my attributes. In my community, too, I felt constantly reminded of my failure. That was truly the loneliest I have ever been. I felt less than human.

Luckily, at my trial, my judge made a simple inquiry: "Why is this happening in your life?" It was the first time someone had asked me that. I don't mean during the case — I mean in my entire life. That sparked a fire in me. My judge believed there was more to my story than the stone of negligence cast upon me. And he was right.

Joining the Army and being deployed to Iraq had changed me. For years after I came home, I battled depression. I had no one I could share my fears, anger and sadness with. I tried to protect my daughter, but gradually, those feelings took over my life.

When the judge asked to hear my story, I remembered that I had survived the war. I found a belief inside myself that I could do the impossible; I could get my daughter back

**TRACY KIDDER,**

author of *Mountains Beyond Mountains*

“To lose a child is surely the worst thing a parent can imagine. Thanks to the brief, heartbreaking stories in *Rise*, we do not have to imagine how painful it would be to lose a child to the state, or to realize that at least part of the fault lies with ourselves.

“This is one of the purposes that autobiographical writing can serve: to offer a reader roads to empathy. And for the writer, it can be a source of relief and help—a way toward looking at the past with clarity, a way toward foreseeing a better future, a way, in short, toward hope.”

*“Many times I had to hold back tears, anger, frustration that felt like a ball of fire. Inside I often felt hot and furious. But I thought about ice, snow and winter to calm me down, and it paid off.”*

**PHILNEIA TIMMONS,**

**A Knock at the Door, 2006**

For the first couple of months after my children were taken, my anger kept me from doing what the system told me I needed to do. Whenever I went to see the caseworker, I wasn't cooperative because I just wanted to smack her.

But after a few months, I realized that I couldn't let that continue. So I prayed, I read the Bible, I told myself again and again to calm down. I also decided that if I was going to change my situation, I couldn't just depend on my caseworker or my lawyer. I would have to learn what I could about the system myself.

I went to the library and the librarian gave me The Family Act Book, a very thick blue book with information about the system. It said I had the right to visit my children, the right to be a part of making decisions about their medical care and education.

I wrote the information down in a notebook. With that knowledge, I would go to meetings at the agency and quote different sections of the book. I wanted them to think I had real power behind me, so when they asked me where I got my information from, I'd lie and say that I had my own lawyer. I spoke calmly but firmly and I carried myself in a way that let them know I was in control.

Many times I had to hold back tears, anger, frustration that felt like a ball of fire. Inside I often felt hot and furious. But I thought about ice, snow and winter to calm me down, and it paid off.

Still, there were limits to how much I could do until I finally got a caseworker who really worked with me. A few months ago, I was given my third caseworker and she's beautiful. I almost love her. She saw how hard I was trying, and she gave me weekend and overnight visits. Soon my two children will be released into my care full time.

**RACHEL AVIV,**

*The New Yorker*

“*Rise helps reverse a false narrative about children who are separated from their parents. The parents and the children are not on opposing sides—they are fighting for the same things. By drawing attention to the neglected voices of parents, the magazine shows that it is a fiction that children in foster care are any less loved than those who remain at home.*”

*“The night before Thanksgiving, I felt so desperate I had to do something. I made a flag that was 3 feet by 4 feet that I mounted to my bike. On one side it said, ‘Do not use drugs or alcohol because it will take your children away.’ On the other side it said, ‘Please GOD watch over Jayme and Sheryl.’ I set out on the morning of Thanksgiving with that flag on my bike and rode from church to church praying for God to help me get my kids back.”*

**JAMES X. SUMROW,**

*A Step in My Direction, 2014*

The night before Thanksgiving I felt so desperate I had to do something. I made a flag that was 3 feet by 4 feet that I mounted to my bike. On one side the flag said, “Do not use drugs or alcohol because it will take your children away.” On the other side it said, “Please GOD watch over Jayme and Sheryl.”

I set out on the morning of Thanksgiving with that flag on my bike and rode from church to church praying for God to help me get my kids back. At the last church I fell off my bike and was lying on the ground looking up into the sky, cursing God. I asked God why he would let something like this happen to me.

I remember being on my knees, telling God, “I don’t really know if you

are there or if you will do anything for me but if I ever needed your help it is right now.” At that moment something miraculous happened. I had energy like I had not had in a long time. I rode my bike to my kids’ grandmother’s house to have Thanksgiving dinner. When I got there I explained what had happened. They all looked at each other like I was crazy.

But the next day, the day before my custody hearing, I got a call from the rehab center. They had a bed for me. They said I should check myself in after my day in court.

I was so scared, I felt like I needed to party one last time. I took my truck that was worth about \$9,000 and sold it to a car lot for \$1,000 so I could get some dope. But I still made it to court in the morning. When I told the judge I was going into rehab the next day the people in the courtroom gave me a look, like, “Yeah, sure you are.” But I made it to rehab and I got clean. It has been the best gift I could give my kids.





*“A parenting class teacher, Ms. V., gave me confidence that, despite my childhood, I could raise my children without neglecting them. The most valuable thing I learned was that I needed to spend time with my children to give them the attention they craved. I didn’t realize that children need attention in order to thrive.”*

**SANDRA EVANS,**

Closer Than Ever, 2009

When I was 12, drugs became my way to numb out all the ugly feelings I had inside from being molested and being ignored by my mother, who always put men ahead of her children. Eventually I tried meth and became addicted. Those painful childhood memories, the ones that no one talks about, disappeared with meth.

My addiction escalated when I was about 25 and caring for my four children under age 5. I found being home all day overwhelming and feared that I did not know how to be a mom. Getting high became my escape from the smallest things—my baby crying, or a fight with my husband.

Finally, in drug treatment, I met a parenting class teacher, Ms. V., who gave me confidence that, despite my childhood, I could raise my children without neglecting them. Ms. V. taught us that little things can set the foundation to connect with your children. For instance, I used to make a bottle, put my baby in the bed, prop up the bottle with a blanket, and

that was that. She told me that feeding the baby in your arms is a way you show the baby you love and care about her.

I learned that children thrive when they have a daily schedule and when you're consistent with them. Ms. V. reminded me to hold my children and tell them I love them, praise them when they do something good, and stick with a punishment once I have set it.

During visits, I would play with my kids, read to them and color. I wanted to hear about everything they had been doing. These were things I hadn't done with my children too often.

The most valuable thing I learned was that I needed to set aside time to spend with my children to give them the attention they craved. I didn't realize that children need attention in order to thrive.

**ADRIAN NICOLE LEBLANC,**

author of *Random Family*

“Those who don’t experience poverty routinely complicate its plain and appalling injustices. One pull toward this denial may be that the sheer mountain of hardship challenges our capacity to absorb the facts. And so people blame the poor, ultimately, for all the suffering heaped upon them.

“In ‘Closer Than Ever,’ Sandra’s honesty doesn’t indulge the false complications. She speaks clearly and simply. The discoveries she shares are an invocation of effort and hope. Can we acknowledge all that she’s been carrying? Hear what she’s allowing us to understand? Her parenting teacher did, and Sandra responded in kind: ‘I didn’t realize that children need attention in order to thrive.’”

*“I was raised to have pride in who I am and stand up for what I believe. Standing up in court to admit that I neglected my children, I felt like everything I knew to be true and right was thrown out the window.”*

**ANTOINETTE ROBINSON,**

Coerced in Court, 2013

I was raised to have pride in who I am and stand up for what I believe. Standing up in court to admit that I neglected my children, I felt like everything I knew to be true and right was thrown out the window.

As the judge looked at me and said, “I strongly suggest you plead guilty,” I broke down and cried.

My lawyer put her head down and told me, “I will do what you want but she’s going to find you guilty. She’s already got her mind made up.”

I had two choices: Make a submission, allowing the court to find me guilty of neglect, or take my case to trial. My lawyer said that if I took the case to trial, it could drag on and on with my kids in care. My lawyer made me feel that if I wanted my children home quickly, I didn’t have much choice but to submit. Still, making the submission was one of the hardest things I ever had to do.

My lawyer said, “My client’s ready.”

The judge said, “What is your plea?”

Tears rolled down my face as I made my submission. My legs were weak. I thought I was going to faint. I felt drained, like the system had broken me.

After I made my submission, the judge said something like: “Do you understand what you are saying? Is anyone forcing you to say these things?”

It felt so crazy, like a rapist was forcing me to say that I’d wanted it.

*“I know that my aunt can provide for my kids better than I can right now, and my kids are happy there. I’ve started thinking that, if they want to stay with my aunt, I could move closer to them. I myself grew up without my mother. I know that I’m not going to stop fighting to be their mother.”*

**ADISHA GARNER,**

Still ‘Mommy,’ 2015

Last week my case planner and the law guardian told me that my kids don’t want to come home. They didn’t give too many details. My case planner just said that she spoke to my kids and they stated to her that they don’t want to be with me.

In the meeting, I just sat there. Afterward, I felt so hurt and angry. I had always thought my kids wanted to come home.

I myself grew up without my mother. All my life I called my mother Malicia and my grandmother “Mommy.” My grandmother made sure to never tell me anything bad about my mother, but I knew she was out there doing drugs. As a child, seeing my mother every day and just walking past her felt really crazy. I wondered whether this person knew I was her child. I always felt like I was alone.

Now my children have been living with my aunt for six years and I see them only on weekends.

Since that meeting, I have felt very confused. Part of me wants to curse out the case planner. Part of me wants to give up on my kids and stop fighting. Part of me wants to fight harder and do anything it takes to get them back home. I just don't know what do.

I know that my aunt can provide for my kids better than I can right now, and my kids are happy there. I've started thinking that, if they want to stay with my aunt, I could move closer to them. If that's what will make them happy, then that's what I'm willing to do. I know that I'm not going to stop fighting to be their mother whether they want to come home or not.

**ANNE FULENWIDER,**  
editor-in-chief, *Marie Claire*

*“Rise first and foremost recognizes the humanity of everyone involved in the child welfare system. The publication cuts through the noise of the debate by reminding us that it is ultimately about parents, children and love. Before fixing the problems, we have to understand them. Rise gives voice to the parents, often ignored or disregarded, and gives them the dignity of telling their stories. In its patient but enlightened approach, it teaches us that sometimes the best thing we can do is simply listen.”*

*“When my daughter came home at 5 years old, it was so different from having her home only on the weekends. The best part was that we didn’t have to say goodbye on Sundays. She always used to say, ‘Mom, I don’t want to go to the other house. When am I going to come home forever?’”*

**ANONYMOUS,**

Baby Steps, 2006



When my daughter came home at 5 years old, after two and a half years in foster care, it was so different from having her home only on the weekends. The best part was that we didn't have to rush spending time together, or deal with having to say goodbye on Sundays. She always used to say, "Mom, I don't want to go the other house. When am I going to come home forever?"

But for the first couple weeks she was giving me a really hard time. She didn't want to brush her teeth or wash her hair. She totally refused to pick up her toys.

One day she got mad at me because I was yelling at her to do her chores. She started throwing toys at me. Then she started slamming her bedroom door. All I wanted to do was grab her by the arm and start spanking her. But I sat on the couch in my living room and just cried. I really cried hard, thinking, "All I wanted her to do was pick up her toys," and, "Does she really hate me so much to throw her toys at me? I worked so hard for her."

I took a deep breath. Our house was silent for that moment. Then I heard her little feet coming into the living room. She came in silently, like she was scared of me, and I felt afraid of myself, that I had frightened her so much just with my words.

My daughter has long black hair and big, dark eyes. She looked up at me and said, in her tiny, squeaky little voice, "Mommy? Mommy?" Her shoulders were down and her tummy was sunk as she approached. I asked her, "Do you not understand why I'm upset?"

Then she started crying and hugging me. "Mommy, I need help picking up my toys," she said. At that moment, I stopped feeling so angry and just wanted to understand her.

**ANDREW SOLOMON,**

author of *Far From the Tree*

“Many people assume that women who lose their children to foster care are not only challenged in meeting the demands of motherhood, but are also bad people: incompetent, selfish and morally defective. *Reading Rise* is a tutorial in empathy, because what rises from these pages is love, often love that has endured despite appalling struggle.

“Robbyne Wiley’s description of how she learned her son’s point of view through reverse role-playing seems especially wise. Often, even attentive parents don’t understand their children’s point of view. But out of fearful hardship can come some kind of emotional coherence, a readiness to accept the complicated nature of love.

*“This mother learned to look clear-eyed at her child’s strengths and shortcomings and to accept them through a recognition of her own strengths (which her experience with the system had called into question) and shortcomings (which once were too frightening to identify because they seemed irreparable). What comes off this page are the essentially courageous nature of reunion and the joy that intimacy can confer.”*



*“In the years after he came home from foster care, it always felt like my youngest son and I were not connecting. I knew I needed to reach him. Discipline didn’t solve the problem. Finally, I thought, ‘He needs counseling.’ Then I corrected myself: ‘No, we need counseling.’ Understanding each other’s perspectives helped my son and me change our behaviors and brought us closer. I can actually say we have bonded.”*

**ROBBYNE WILEY,**

Bonded for Life, 2012

In the years after he came home from foster care, it always felt like my youngest son and I were not connecting. I knew I needed to reach him. Discipline didn't solve the problem.

Finally, when my son was 12, I thought, "He needs counseling." Then I corrected myself: "No, *we* need counseling."

In family therapy we played a game where I would be my son and he would be me. Playing my son, I would say things like, "Ma, can I go outside?"

"Go outside for what?" he'd say. I began to think, "Every time I ask for something, he's yelling." I really started feeling sad.

Other times, my son, acting as me, would ask me if I stole something. My son has this puppy dog look he gives where he looks real cute. I'd give him that sad look and I wouldn't say anything.

"Mommy, why you not answering me?" he'd ask, getting frustrated.

Understanding each other's perspectives helped my son and me change our behaviors and brought us closer. Some days after school, my son will rush into my bedroom all excited and say, "Ma, you know what happened today? At school?"

I remember one time when I did not feel like talking with him. I was thinking, "Oh, no, I'm tired." But my son grabbed the remote and pressed pause, lying on the bed with his head on my shoulder, telling me about his day, like a little boy. I noticed that his hair was really fresh smelling, like the apple shampoo he uses, and as I listened and talked with him, I felt so happy and connected to my son. I can actually say we have bonded.

**Rise Thanks...**

Rise grew out of a collaboration between two New York City non-profits: **Youth Communication**, publisher of *Represent*, a magazine by youth in foster care, and the **Child Welfare Organizing Project (CWOP)**, a parent advocacy and peer support organization. From 2001 to 2005, *Represent* editors Rachel Blustain and Nora McCarthy ran writing workshops for parents at CWOP, publishing the stories in a Parents' Perspectives column in *Represent*. From 2005 to 2008 Rise was a project of Youth Communication. We became fiscally sponsored by Youth Communication in 2008, and shared an office with CWOP from 2008 to 2014. To both organizations, the board of Youth Communication, and **Keith Hefner, Tom Brown, Mike Arsham** and **Teresa Bachiller**, especially, thank you for all of your tremendous support.

Rise is now a partner project of **The Fund for the City of New York**. Thank you, **Mary McCormick** and the Fund, for so generously providing a home base to Rise.

To everyone involved with **The Child Welfare Fund**: Thank you for your belief in parents and in Rise, and for your generosity—you have been our backbone all of these years.

**David Tobis** championed Rise from the beginning. Thank you, David, for highlighting Rise in your book, hosting our first party and endlessly believing in us.

**Jeremy Kohomban** at Children's Village and NYC Children's Services under former commissioner **John Mattingly** were Rise's first subscribers. Thank you to our many subscribers, who bring Rise to parents and send the message: "We listen to parents. We value parents' stories. We want parents to succeed."

Other supporters have included: the **Annie E. Casey Foundation, Casey Family Programs, Center for the Study of Social Policy, COFCCA, the Dammann Fund, Graham Windham, Hedge Funds Care, Hite Foundation, New York Women's Foundation, New Yorkers for Children, North Star Fund, NYC's Children's Services, NYU Sunshine Fund, Pinkerton Foundation, Sheltering Arms, van Ameringen Foundation** and the **Viola W. Bernard Foundation**.

Too many people to name have contributed to Rise's success. For their extraordinary moral support and kindness, we would especially like to thank: **Elizabeth Kandall, Matt Fraidin, Michele Cortese, Anstiss Agnew, Susan Chinitz, Dana Guyet, Melissa Baker, Liza Blank, Lauren and Steve Pilgrim, and Jess Dannhauser.**

Rise could not have stayed its course without our editorial director, **Rachel Blustain**. Rachel, your passion and commitment have been our bedrock. Thank you.

Lastly, Rise owes everything to the parents who have had the courage to tell their stories. To our long-term leaders and contributors **Antoinette Robinson, Robbyne Wiley, Bevanjae Kelley, Jeanette Vega, Sabra Jackson, Sonia Diaz, Nicole Goodwin, Lynne Miller, Erica Harrigan-Orr, Sylvia Perez, Ilka Perez, Evelyn Salazar, Tahitia Foggie** and **Piazadora Footman**—thank you. Your willingness to be open and honest about the most painful moments in your lives is helping to transform the lives of so many other parents and children. Thank you for telling your stories to change minds and lives.



For you Nora, Rachel, and all the writers at Rise

From “Despedida Ardiente”  
By Patrick Rosal

All you have to do is speak  
simply. Your business  
is the truth. Your heart’s  
catastrophe is just  
a little of history’s twisted bulwark.  
If there weren’t a sky  
within your chest  
worth breaking, believe  
me, you  
would have stopped  
all this singing  
by now.

From Elizabeth Kandall,  
Co-Founder of The Fostering Connection





**Safe Children**  
**Strong Families**  
**Supportive Communities**

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Casey Family Programs congratulates Rise on 10 years of lifting parents' voices to change minds and lives.

Strengthening parents is fundamental to helping children in foster care.

Casey Family Programs is the nation's largest operating foundation focused on safely reducing the need for foster care and building Communities of Hope for children and families across America. Learn more at [\*\*casey.org/hope\*\*](http://casey.org/hope).

**SAFE  
STRONG  
SUPPORTIVE**





# **FORESTDALE**

FAMILY WHEN FAMILIES NEED US

**The Forestdale Family  
congratulates RISE on  
their 10th Anniversary!**



Forestdale serves more than 1,500 Queens families annually. We go well beyond the requirements of providing a safe atmosphere – we help to identify and address the reasons for distress among families to improve their overall well-being and set the stage for their healthy futures.

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**THANK YOU TO RISE,  
FOR GIVING OUR CLIENTS A VOICE**

DAVID LANSNER  
&  
CAROLYN KUBITSCHKEK

LANSNER &  
KUBITSCHKEK

**Parent involvement in a child's life makes it much more likely that the child will stay in school, graduate, and move on to a successful career.**

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The Children's Village is proud to partner with parents.

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We support Rise and the creative outlet they provide parents facing the child welfare system.



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COFCCA

Leadership, voice and vision for child welfare in New York State

*congratulates*

**Rise**

*for 10 years of wonderful work with parents and*

**Diane Leske**

*COFCCA Chief of Staff*

*on her appointment to the Rise Board of Directors*



# GRAHAM

CARING FOR KIDS & FAMILIES  
SINCE 1806



**GRAHAM WINDHAM IS PROUD TO PARTNER WITH RISE  
AND CONGRATULATES RISE ON ITS 10TH ANNIVERSARY!**



**CONGRATULATES**

**RISE MAGAZINE**

**ON ITS 10TH ANNIVERSARY,**

**AND FOR THEIR COMMITMENT IN PROVIDING  
A VENUE THAT GIVES A VOICE TO  
PARENTS AND THE OPPORTUNITY  
TO CHANGE MINDS AND LIVES!**

**The staff and trustees of  
Jewish Child Care Association  
congratulate  
the talented writers at Rise  
on their 10th Anniversary celebration.**

Best wishes to guest speakers  
Anne Williams-Isom,  
ACS Commissioner Gladys Carrión  
and all of Rise's wonderful supporters.

**RONALD E. RICHTER, CEO**



a beneficiary of  
**UJA Federation**  
of New York

## **SCO FAMILY OF SERVICES CONGRATULATES *RISE* MAGAZINE**

***for 10 years of empowering parents***

*to share their stories,*

*to find support, and*

*to help child welfare professionals  
better understand the families and  
communities we serve.*



Extraordinary reach.  
Unconditional care.  
Life-changing results.

[www.sco.org](http://www.sco.org)



# SHELTERING 18 ARMS 31

Children and Family Services

*proudly congratulates its foster  
care staff for completing the  
Rise: Staff Writes Program:*

*Samantha Curtin*

*Carmen Sanchez*

*Kathryn Hall*

*Peta-Gaye Woodbine*

*Kenneth Cruz*

*Kathleen Woods*

*Stephanie Shackelford*

[ShelteringArmsNY.org](http://ShelteringArmsNY.org)

*Special thanks to Rise for the  
opportunity to grow through  
a strong partnership!*

**BROOKLYN DEFENDER SERVICES,  
FAMILY DEFENSE PRACTICE  
CONGRATULATES RISE ON THEIR  
TEN YEARS OF EMPOWERING PARENTS  
IN THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM.**



**BROOKLYN  
DEFENDER  
SERVICES**

# The Bronx Defenders

## CFR CONGRATULATES RISE ON AN INCREDIBLE 10 YEARS! FROM ALL THE STAFF AND CLIENTS OF CFR, THANK YOU



- for hosting our first-ever writing group for cfr parents
- for featuring our staff in articles
- for valuable tools that push the system toward creativity and compassion
- for giving voice to the struggles, triumphs, resiliency and love of parents
- for reminding us, with every word, that every family matters

Center  
for the  
Study  
of  
Social  
Policy

**CONGRATULATIONS ON  
10 YEARS OF ELEVATING  
THE VOICES OF PARENTS!**

**– CENTER FOR THE STUDY  
OF SOCIAL POLICY**



**New York State Citizens Coalition for Children**  
Supporting Foster, Adoptive and Kinship families  
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New Paltz, NY 12561  
[www.nysccc.org](http://www.nysccc.org)

**CONGRATULATIONS ON  
10 YEARS OF SHARING  
STORIES AND BUILDING  
UNDERSTANDING!**

**Lawyers  
For  
Children**

THANKS TO RISE FOR GETTING SILENCED VOICES HEARD  
AND FOR TEACHING SO MANY WHAT IT FEELS  
LIKE TO SURVIVE THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM.

NYU FAMILY DEFENSE CLINIC AND  
CHRIS GOTTLIEB AND MARTY GUGGENHEIM

We salute Rise and Nora McCarthy on this special  
evening. Their story is our story!



The social work authors of the forthcoming *Narrative Social Work: Accounts From the Field* commend Nora McCarthy and Rachel Blustain on their extraordinary achievement: the 10th anniversary of Rise.

As writers we know the courage it takes to put feelings into words and then on paper for all to read. Ernest Hemingway said, "There is nothing to writing. All you do is sit down at a typewriter and bleed."

To the courageous parents who have told their moving stories, we applaud you. You are making a difference in helping others find their voices, which in turn is impacting the system. Congratulations!



**NORTH  
STAR  
FUND**

"I write to find out what I'm thinking. I write  
to find out who I am. I write to understand things."

— Julia Alvarez

Congratulations RISE on a decade of  
stories of truth about families and the  
foster care system!

# **WE PROUDLY SUPPORT THE WORK OF RISE MAGAZINE. CONGRATULATIONS ON 10 YEARS!**



**Solution Based Casework®**  
*Sometimes the simple things are the most radical.*

Congratulations to Rise on your 10th anniversary! We are proud that you are a member of the Birth Parent National Network (BPNN), where parent voices help shape policy and practice across the country.

We all hope your readers will be interested in joining the BPNN. For more information, visit [bpnn.ctfalliance.org](http://bpnn.ctfalliance.org)



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## **CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR FAVORITE PUBLICATION FOR GIVING A VOICE FOR 10 YEARS TO PARENTS IN THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM.**

Diane Redleaf — Founder (in 2005!) & Executive Director



**The Family Defense Center**

*Advocating justice for families in the child welfare system*

# **With Every Story We Rise**

**Invitation Design:** Marysia Makowska

**Event Journal Design:** Mary Austin Speaker

**Poster Design:** Todd St. John

**Rise Web Redesign:** BeBetter Studios

**Tech Truck:** Stu Weiner

**Poets House:** we could not be more grateful for the gift of your space.  
Thank you for donating this night to Rise.

Thank you all for generously giving your time and talents to helping Rise  
tell its story.



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**(646) 543-7099**

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