

Information and Frequently Asked Questions

Helpful Resources

- [Friends of the Children -- Coachella Valley Website](#)
- [Friends -- Coachella Valley 2025 / 2026 Gratitude Report](#)
- [Champions for Children Web Page](#)
- [Friends -- Coachella Valley Ways To Give Web Page](#)
- [Harvard Business School Association of Oregon Study](#)

Why should I join the Friends of the Children – Coachella Valley Champions for Children Circle?

- The Champions for Children Circle Program gives you a **purposeful, flexible way to turn what you already have**—your relationships, community knowledge, credibility, professional skills, and passion—**into a lasting opportunity for children. Because our children are our community’s future and help our community thrive.**
- If you are looking for a place where you feel accepted and know that your contributions count, then **Friends of the Children – Coachella Valley is a perfect fit.** We’re a friendly, fun, heartwarming circle that loves children and our community. **You’ll meet like-minded people who feel a strong sense of purpose.** Our mantra is... *“Our Valley, Our Children, Our Future. We’re in this Together.”*
- **Being in the Champions for Children Circle is about invitation, not pressure.** You share a mission you believe in, create opportunities for others to learn, and allow them to choose how they want to engage.
- **Every network has value.** A future donor, volunteer, board member, business partner, school connection, in-kind resource, advocate, or community champion may already be **one relationship away.**

- Your outreach has a purpose: **helping the right people understand a 12+ year long-term commitment to local children facing adversity** and inviting them to become part of the support system that sustains it.
- As a member of the Champions for Children's Circle, you are a community hero because you help create the relationships, visibility, resources, and community partnerships that **allow Friends to keep its 12+ year promise to children year after year.**

What is Friends of the Children – Coachella Valley's mission?

To impact generational change by empowering youth who are facing the greatest obstacles through relationships with professional mentors – **12+ years, no matter what.**

What do you mean by “no matter what”?

A child is never removed from the 12+ year commitment because of caregiver status or school challenges.

What if a child moves away from the Valley?

Friends of the Children -- Coachella Valley is part of a 48-chapter network. Regardless of where the child moves, we will work to find the necessary support.

What does ‘breaking the cycle of generational poverty’ mean?

BREAKING THE CYCLE means helping children gain the skills needed to become productive members of society and avoid the traps that will keep them experiencing trauma and hardship.

Can you describe a few program experiences you provide for children during the 12+ years?

Each child is paired with a paid professional mentor, which we call a ‘Friend’. Friends spend 4 hours a week with each child in the classroom, community, and with caregivers. The Friend is a

child's link to recreational, cultural, and community activities that enhance build their experiences, build a growth mindset, and empower their success.

The Friends Clubhouse serves as an important resource each child accesses across their 12+ years' experience.

- Physical features of the Clubhouse include homework corners, reading nooks, a kitchen, and play space. The clubhouse is organized into 4 areas:
 - 1) Academic support and learning
 - 2) Social-emotional development
 - 3) Life skills and independence
 - 4) Enrichment & joy
- The Clubhouse also provides the opportunity to socialize, engage with other children, and celebrate Birthdays or other milestones.
- Donors contribute snacks, books, supplies, and technology to the Clubhouse.

How do you communicate and partner with a child's Caregiver?

Friends of the Children – Coachella Valley engages caregivers BEFORE a child is formally accepted, as part of a rigorous child selection and enrollment process. We build trust by visiting the family at home and conducting individualized outreach. The program is invitation-based. However, the caregiver **must consent and be a partner in our 12+ year commitment before the agreement is finalized.**

The 12+ year program is a **two-generation (2Gen) approach**. The Friend helps caregivers understand their child's needs and strengths, equips them with parenting skills, supports school engagement (including attending parent-teacher meetings), connects the family to concrete resources (housing, employment, education), and expands social networks through family engagement events.

Ongoing communication is relationship-based, delivered through the assigned professional mentor or Friend. A Friend makes, on average, **2 to 4 contacts per month with caregivers**. This happens at home, in school, and in the community.

What will the donations I generate help fund?

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Donations help pay for general operating costs of the mission, including children's school supplies, child outings, extracurricular activities, school uniforms, child and family celebrations, and clubhouse gifts such as snacks, books, supplies, technology, and mentor compensation.

What is my expected role in building awareness and generating donations?

- **Spread the word** about Friends of the Children – Coachella Valley's mission and impact, and answer questions through tours, events, and conversations.
- **Coordinate and lead presentations** and small group discussions. Use the materials, training, and support provided by Friends of the Children – Coachella Valley.
- **Introduce Friends' staff** to prospective donors, sponsors, corporate partners, foundations, and community leaders.
- **Participate in periodic Champion gatherings** to exchange ideas, celebrate successes, and stay informed about Friends of the Children – Coachella Valley's impact.

What type of networks should I engage with to help spread the word about Friends of the Children – Coachella Valley?

Country clubs, golf, tennis, pickleball, yoga, fitness, or other physical activity clubs; chambers of commerce, Rotary clubs, civic organizations; professional organizations; faith-based communities; or other community networks where you're actively involved.

What are some ideas I can use to help spread the word?

Champion Action	What it can make possible
Invite 5 people to the F Friends of the Children – Coachella Valley to a briefing or program visit	More community members understand Friends' long-term approach and may become donors, partners, volunteers, or advocates.
Make one warm introduction to a local business or civic leader	A potential sponsorship, in-kind resource, employee-engagement opportunity, board prospect, or partnership conversation
Host a small gathering in a home, office, or community setting	A trusted space for people to hear Friends of the Children – Coachella Valley's mission directly and decide how they want to participate

Champion Action	What it can make possible
Connect Friends of the Children – Coachella Valley with a school, service provider, employer, or neighborhood group	New pathways to resources and opportunity for youth and families
Bring a guest to an event	A future supporter begins a relationship with the organization

How do you explain the difference between Friends of the Children – Coachella Valley and other non-profits?

1. Friends of the Children is the **only** nationwide youth mentoring program that **fills an urgent gap**: children facing the greatest obstacles are paired with a salaried, professional mentor **who stays with them**, their caregivers, and teachers from early childhood through high school graduation—**12+ years, no matter what**.
2. **Unlike other organizations**, Friends of the Children – Coachella Valley **is not a temporary intervention. The long-term program is a donor’s ‘prevention’ investment**, not a short-term response to one moment of crisis. The long-term mentor stays for 12+ years so that a child can build hope, make healthy choices, and create a different future for their family and community.

A donor’s investment does more than fund an activity or a school-year program. **It helps ensure that a child who is experiencing trauma and instability has one caring, skilled adult who will not disappear when life gets difficult.**
3. The mentoring program is a **two-generation approach** that helps meet the needs of **the child, their caregiver, siblings, and their teachers** for 12+ years.
4. The long-term, 12+ year program **interweaves into the social and economic fabric of the community – moving prosperity forward**. When a Friends of the Children youth crosses the high school stage, the community does not just gain a graduate — it **gains a stable, contributing young adult who anchors our local Coachella Valley economy**.

What proof do you have that your long-term mentoring model changes a child’s trajectory and brings value to our community?

Friends of the Children has more than 34 years of real-world data, including independent studies:

Champions for Children Circle

- **The Harvard Business School of Oregon** conducted a social return on investment study on Friends of the Children, underscoring the important impact of the program.
- **92%** of program youth go on to enroll in post-secondary education, serve our country, or enter the workforce with a living-wage job.
- **Social Value:** By delaying parenthood past their teen years (**98%**) and avoiding the juvenile justice system (**93%**), they break cycles of generational trauma that have burdened their families and neighborhoods for decades.
- **Prosperity Forward Value:** When a young person stays, works, studies, or serves in the Coachella Valley community, **they reinvest their skills and wages locally — strengthening schools, employers, tax bases, and the next generation of children who now have a living example of what's possible.** This is how a 12+ year commitment to one child becomes a multi-generational return on the community's investment: one graduate at a time; prosperity moves forward.
- **Economic Value:** Each child who completes the Friends of the Children – Coachella Valley program is estimated to return roughly **\$900,000** in lifetime value to the community.

What are the top 5 mission needs?

- **Increase awareness of our mission** – since December 2024, we've partnered with **48** children and their families. Friends (mentors) have devoted nearly **15K+ hours to 1:1 work** with the children. **98%** of Teachers and Caregivers report significant learning milestones achieved since being paired with a Mentor.
- **Funds to amplify our impact and grow** – We want to grow the number of children we partner with for 12+ years. That means doubling the number of children and families we partner with to **100 by 2030.**
- **Secure a larger, more expansive Clubhouse area or building** – We prefer an East Valley location so it's convenient for the children and families we currently serve. We are looking for a donated building or greatly reduced rent. There are certain specifications since we work with children.
- **Board Members** – in our next phase of growth, we need Board members who can actively help raise resources (*financial, in-kind, institutional, and government support*) and amplify awareness for our mission.
- **In-kind contributions** – Everything from supplies for our children and Clubhouse to media support to auction items.

What goals with donors am I expected to achieve each year?

- Conduct **one to two** small Friend fundraisers.

- Introduce Friends of the Children – Coachella Valley’s mission and impact to **24 new community members** (2 a month) per year through clubs, organizations, or personal networks.
- We’ll work 1:1 with you about your ability to **generate anywhere from \$ 10,000 to \$ 1M in philanthropic support annually**. And we’ll evaluate your donor opportunities based on people you already know, and the introductions, sponsorships, donations, strategic partnerships, and/or in-kind contributions you can realistically generate. *Friends staff will partner in fundraising conversations, as needed.*

What are the different ways people can get involved?

[Our Ways To Get Involved web](#) page shares several opportunities for engagement, including:

1. Donate specific dollar amounts that make an impact.

\$250

Covers a year of extracurricular activities where a child can discover interests, practice **commitment and perseverance**, and experience the pride of getting better at something over time. *Practice. Progress. Pride.*

\$1,000

Creates a special experience for children and families to celebrate progress, strengthen **family and community connections**, and build memories rooted in achievement and joy. *Milestones matter. So does celebrating them.*

\$5,000

Provides healthy snacks at the Clubhouse throughout the year, helping create a consistent, welcoming environment where children can recharge, connect, and be ready to engage.

2. Monthly Giving: A monthly gift helps us build something lasting. Recurring gifts help create generational change.

3. Donate to Friends of the Children – Coachella Valley **through our Amazon Wishlist** – shop and support.

4. In-Kind Donations: can include books, games, and school supplies to museum memberships, summer camp enrollments, and tickets to special events.

What type of marketing support does Friends of the Children – Coachella Valley provide to Champions?

All Champions receive:

- A mission information card for potential donors with a QR code on back so a potential donor can go directly to the “Get Involved” page on the website
- One-page handout to give to potential donors, sponsors, or strategic partners
- Orientation and messaging training
- Presentation materials, talking points, and impact updates
- Ongoing partnership and support from Friends’ staff
- Invitations to exclusive briefings and mission experiences
- Recognition as a “*Friends of the Children Champion*” on the Friends of the Children – Coachella Valley website (optional)

How long has the local Coachella Valley chapter existed?

Our Coachella Valley chapter launched December 2024. We currently work with 6 professional mentors who are partnering with 48 children and their families. However, Friends of the Children National was founded 34 years ago in Portland, Oregon, and now has **48** chapters nationwide.

Where do your referrals for children come from, and what’s your selection process for becoming part of the program?

Our child selection process is grounded in care and intention at every step. It is not about moving quickly, but about a relationship-centered approach that begins long before a child is ever enrolled.

We select through **referrals from child welfare agencies, schools, and community partners, who help identify children ages 4–6 who could most benefit from a relationship with a Friend.** Assessments include individual and environmental risk and protective factors through observation and a codified assessment before being enrolled in the program.

What’s the role of a professional mentor or ‘Friend’?

- Each Friend invests a minimum of **4 hours per week 1:1 with each child** – depending on a child's needs.
- Friends listen to a child's hopes and dreams and help them set their own goals. They are mobile and flexible.
- **Every week, every month, every year for 12+ years**, they spend time with each child in school, neighborhood, and community settings.
- The Coachella Valley chapter Friends have **backgrounds in Education, Psychology, and Child Development, as well as lived experience teaching, caring for, and mentoring children.**
- Friends provide a link between the different facets of the child's life:
 - Engage children in recreational, cultural, and community service activities that enhance their talents and skills.
 - Visit with each child at school and support their teachers.
 - Build relationships with families and partner with them to help their children thrive.

Is there research about the benefits of 12+ years of youth mentoring?

Yes, Friends of the Children was founded in 1992 in Portland, Oregon. A study conducted by the [*Harvard Business School Association of Oregon*](#) validated the social return on investment.

The results showed that Friends of the Children's long-term mentoring graduates experienced greater educational achievement, as well as decreased involvement in the justice system and teen parenting compared to similar youth who do not have access to the 12+ years program.

These achievements relate directly to the ability to escape the cycle of poverty.

Friends of the Children is built on a simple premise: **children** experiencing adversity need more than a short-term program; they **need a dependable adult relationship that lasts.**

Our research shows that **mentoring benefits strengthen when relationships are** consistent, high-quality, and **sustained over time.**

Mentoring relationships that last more than a year are associated with stronger academic, social, and behavioral outcomes than short-lived time frames.

In a randomized controlled trial, **children assigned to Friends of the Children demonstrated more positive school behavior and less trouble in school during the first five years of participation.**

Is there a cost for families to be part of Friends of the Children – Coachella Valley?

There is *never* a cost to families or children.

You mention a “two-generation” impact. Can you explain?

Our approach meets the needs of both youth and their caregivers. Our mentors support parents and caregivers holistically:

- Support caregivers so they understand their child’s needs and strengths.
- Equip caregivers with social and emotional learning skills.
- Connect families to housing, education, and employment pathways.

What are your goals for the future?

Where We’re Headed

Our 10-Year Anniversary 2034 Vision

240

Children enrolled in a 12+ year relationship with a Mentor



Children from our 2024 cohort will be preparing to graduate from High School!

3

Campuses serving East Valley, Mid Valley, and West Valley

What’s the largest donation Friends of the Children – Coachella Valley has received?

We launched our local Coachella Valley chapter in December 2024. At that time, a group of local Coachella Valley philanthropists, seeing the deep need and impact of Friends of the Children, provided our seed funding – our largest funding to date, which helped our first year of operations. Our work is supported by the community, and every dollar raised makes a difference.

Do you have a National Ambassador?

Yes, **Simone Biles** is our National Ambassador -- a true World Champion! Friends of the Children is honored to have Simone's voice amplifying our mission. And we are grateful for her authenticity, resilience, and unwavering belief in the power of long-term, professional mentorship. Her mother, Nelli, is also on our National Board. **Here is Simone with Mateo, one of the children in our Coachella Valley program, during a recent virtual visit.**

