

INSIDE:



PROTECTING KIDS IN THE SOUTH

Welcome Betsy
to our growing
Southern team!

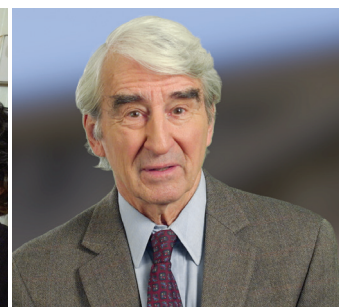


PROVIDING HOPE

Join our movement
for America's most
vulnerable children

IN FOCUS:

Children's Rights' Landmark Win for Kids to Air on PBS



Photos courtesy of The Visionaries

Actor Sam Waterston is best known for his roles in *Law and Order* and *The Newsroom*. But he has also spent years as host of *The Visionaries*, an award-winning PBS documentary series featuring organizations tackling some of the country's most difficult social problems. This year, Children's Rights is proud to be one of the 12 nonprofits, selected from among hundreds, to be profiled.

Waterston is committed to *The Visionaries* because he believes in the central idea that "doing what you can about huge, intractable problems — is an idea worth encouraging." The Children's Rights story certainly fits that mold: it shows us how one of the worst child welfare systems in the country became one of the best.

The film chronicles the lengthy legal battle waged by Children's Rights and our partners to transform Tennessee's badly broken foster care system. When the lawsuit was first filed, the situation for kids in foster care in Tennessee was dire. They were kept

in overcrowded emergency shelters, moved from placement to placement, denied contact with siblings and their home communities, and warehoused in group facilities.

Almost 20 years later, harnessing the power of the courts proved to be the most effective tool to spark lasting reform. Today children in Tennessee are more likely to be reunified with their families, adopted more quickly, and not put in group homes. Fewer kids are aging out of care without a permanent family, and more children get the critical assistance they need. And there has been progress in reducing the overrepresentation of African American children in the foster care system.

No state's system is perfect, but Tennessee has come a long way toward better serving children and their families — and has become a model for other states across the country.

For information about viewing the documentary, visit childrensrights.org/pbs.



ON THE FRONTLINES

On any given day there are nearly 150,000 children in foster care systems across the South. These children yearn for healing, but are often denied access to critical physical and mental health services. They seek stability, but are often shuffled through a labyrinth of shelters, foster homes, group homes and detention facilities. And with every move, the trauma of being separated from their original home is compounded. A shocking number enter adulthood with no family, no support and few life skills.

That's why a year ago Children's Rights launched our Southern office and put into action a plan to bring hope to a new generation of children in the region. We didn't do this alone. We did it with formidable and passionate champions for the rights of kids: our amazing steering committee of community leaders

who are galvanizing local support across the region; and the folks at Hall Booth Smith, who are not only providing us with office space in downtown Atlanta, but building a team of pro bono attorneys to work by our side.

There is much work to be done. But we are making progress. As the map below shows, we currently have boots on the ground in several Southern states, holding governments accountable for the children in their care — children who are powerless to advocate for themselves. And because of your support, Children's Rights can continue to change hundreds of thousands of lives.

Sandy Santana, Executive Director

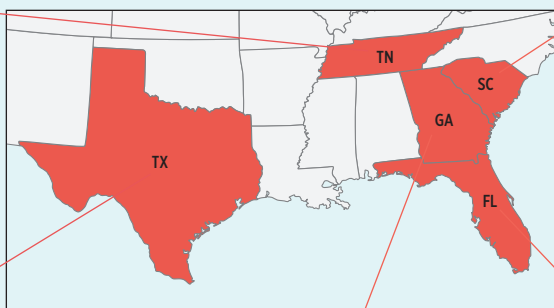
Making Life Better for Kids in the Region

TENNESSEE

Our landmark case led to the overhaul of the child welfare system — and is now a model for the nation.

TEXAS

In a huge victory for children, a judge required reforms to a woefully inadequate system.



SOUTH CAROLINA & GEORGIA

We are holding governments accountable for reforming their broken child welfare systems.

GEORGIA

Our new office brings hope to children in child welfare systems across the South.

FLORIDA

A settlement in March will help keep kids safe and healthy.

REGIONWIDE

Through advocacy efforts and competency trainings, our LGBTQ Project works to improve the lives of LGBTQ youth in out-of-home care.

CR INSIDER: JOHN HALL ON THINKING BIG

When Children's Rights Lead Counsel Christina Remlin and Southern Steering Committee Chair Greg Hecht made a presentation in early 2018 to a roomful of lawyers from Hall Booth Smith, one of Atlanta's largest litigation defense firms, it made a big impact. Amazingly, Hall Booth Smith responded by offering office space for the Children's Rights Southern team in their own headquarters, as well as staff assistance and pro bono legal support. **Founding partner John Hall** recently talked about why Hall Booth Smith is making this significant contribution to CR's future growth.

CR: Hall Booth Smith's offer is incredibly generous—free office space and firm-wide pro bono support. What made you jump on board so decisively in support of our work?

John Hall: Greg is an old friend, so I knew I wanted to have him and Christina tell us the story of what Children's Rights is trying to do in the region. It was an eye-opener. Children's Rights does a good deal of its work in the South because the region's nearly 150,000 children in foster care are in desperate need. We were impressed both with the success you are having locally here in Georgia and across the country, but also the need to do so much more. It was clear that you are doing important work.

CR: Where would you like to see the partnership with Children's Rights be in a year?

John: We are very excited that the staff is already growing and that Christina has added a full-time staff attorney. We have all the space and support in place to help you expand even further. At the same time, I want to get our whole team

involved and be a big partner with Children's Rights in the South, where you have so much going on.

CR: What would you say is the ROI for Hall Booth?

John: Giving back to the community is in our firm's DNA. Providing pro bono support to an organization like Children's Rights is something we are tremendously proud to do. This way, we are making the connections that much easier for our attorneys because we are all here in the same space. Working with Children's Rights strengthens our firm by giving us a common vision.

CR: As a litigator, what is your perspective on the use of legal action to effect large-scale change?

John: There is no question in my mind—and Children's Rights' track record is a testimony to this—that litigation can galvanize reform of government systems that are harming people, especially defenseless children, in the process. I am also impressed that Children's Rights is making a big push to expand beyond



John Hall, Hall Booth Smith

litigation and use the tools of advocacy and partnership to strategically address systemic problems in a targeted way that will enhance your overall effectiveness. It's an exciting time to partner up with Children's Rights and pool our resources to make a difference in the lives of countless children.

Children's Rights is proud to work with our Southern Steering Committee and staff:

Greg Hecht, *Chair*; David Brackett; Cecilia Crutchfield; Holli Hines Easton; Karyn Froseth; Jo Ann Herold; Dr. Rhonda Jeffries; Patricia Kellner; Hon. Cassandra Kirk; Darren Summerville.

Sandy Santana, *Executive Director*;
ATLANTA-BASED STAFF: Christina Wilson Remlin, *Lead Counsel*; Aaron Finch, *Senior Staff Attorney*; Betsy Weintraub, *Staff Attorney*.



Christina W. Remlin
@ChristinaRemlin

Following

We couldn't be more thrilled about this tremendous hire! Thanks to everyone who has made our expanding Southeast team possible! #protectingkids @HallBoothSmith @BetsyWeintraub

Staffing Up to Protect Even More Kids

Our Atlanta office is thrilled to welcome **Betsy Weintraub**, who joins Children's Rights as a staff attorney. Betsy comes to us from Tennessee, where she has had extensive litigation and trial experience. She worked in private practice in the area of employment litigation, and in public interest positions including supervising a violent crimes unit as an Assistant Attorney General (including sex crimes, DV cases and crimes against children), and with Legal Services handling domestic violence cases. Betsy received her J.D. from University of Memphis School of Law.

Welcome to the team, Betsy! #ProtectingKids

GET INVOLVED!



JOIN THE ATLANTA BENEFIT COMMITTEE

Email
development@childrensrights.org
to learn more.

BECOME A MEMBER

For as little as \$10/month,
you can make a difference for
America's children.

childrensrights.org/member

DONATE YOUR BIRTHDAY

Celebrate by giving back.
Learn more at

childrensrights.org/birthday

TAKE OUR SURVEY

What are your top priorities for
children in 2020 and the years
ahead? Tell us which issues
matter to you most:

www.childrensrights.org/survey

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To make a gift to Children's Rights,
visit www.childrensrights.org and click "Donate Now."

**CHILDREN'S
RIGHTS**
PROTECTING KIDS.
PROVIDING HOPE.