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**First Lady of Los Angeles, Amy Elaine Wakeland, Joined the Los Angeles Youth Network to Raise more than $275,000 for Homeless and Foster Youth**

**Los Angeles – October 20, 2016 –** Supporters of the [Los Angeles Youth Network](http://www.layn.org/) (LAYN) gathered on October 8 at Skyline 204 in Hollywood to recognize community and advocacy leaders for their commitment and unwavering service to foster, homeless and LGBT youth.

The organization’s 31st annual Key of Hope Gala raised more than $275,000 to support LAYN’s critical work for homeless and foster youth in Los Angeles County.

This year, LAYN honored [John DeFazio](https://www.linkedin.com/in/defaziojohn), senior vice president at Heffernan Insurance. DeFazio, an executive with more than 28 years of leadership in property & casualty and employee benefits, was recognized for his commitment to charitable giving and dedication to helping other help themselves.

“Through his hard work and service with Heffernan Insurance Brokers, John has been steadfast in ensuring that LAYN can safely and securely provide for the thousands of youth we have and continue to serve,” said Mark Supper, LAYN CEO. “John has been a partner with LAYN and a partner in the community. He leads by example and his efforts are visible by giving his time, financial resources and his guidance.”

Hosted by Councilman Mitch O’Farrell, more than 250 guests dined on the venue’s rooftop, overlooking Hollywood, as the First Lady of Los Angeles, [Amy Elaine Wakeland](https://www.lamayor.org/amy-elaine-wakeland) talked about the importance of supporting organizations like LAYN. [Daffany Clark](http://www.daffanyclark.com/), an actress and producer from Chicago, spoke about her experience as a foster youth and her role as a foster parent on ABC’s *The Fosters*.

As the evening continued, LAYN youth, Promise received a standing ovation, after telling about her life as a youth at LAYN, earning her associate’s degree, obtaining her citizenship --- with the help of LAYN staff --- and currently pursuing a bachelor’s degree at Cal State. The extraordinary evening also featured celebrity guest, [Kym Whitley](http://www.iamkymwhitley.com/) of OWN Network’s *Raising Whitley* and was brought to a close with NBC’s *The Voice* finalist, [India Carney](http://www.nbc.com/the-voice/artists/season-8/india-carney).

Annually, LAYN houses over 500 youth and provides more than 16,000 bed nights and 97,000 meals, to youth 12-21 years old.

**About Los Angeles Youth Network**

Since 1985, Los Angeles Youth Network (LAYN) has served runaway, foster and other youth experiencing homelessness ages 12-21 that includes emergency, group and long-term housing. LAYN provides comprehensive programs and services teaching independent living skills and resources necessary for youth to lead productive lives, while offering a wide array of educational and enrichment programs. In addition, LAYN operates a high school in partnership with the Los Angeles Unified School District. For more information, visit [www.layn.org](http://www.layn.org).

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