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# The Daily Transcript

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## Golding takes on new job as head of Promises2Kids

By ELIZABETH MALLOY

The Daily Transcript

SAN DIEGO — Former San Diego Mayor Susan Golding is out of politics and into the nonprofit sector these days, working as the president and chief executive officer of Promises2Kids, the organization formerly known as the Child Abuse Prevention Foundation.

Golding said the organization has

been important to her since she was a county supervisor, and it's where she's focusing the majority of her attention now.

"I don't have any plans to run for political office, but you know, I never had plans to run a nonprofit either," she said with a laugh.

Since finishing two terms as mayor of San Diego, Golding has worked as a board member on com-

panies like the Titan Corp., Avanir Pharmaceuticals and First Pacific Bank, and also has done consulting work.

In the political arena, she was appointed by the governor to the Ocean Protection Council and was on the Marine Life Protection Act Task Force for four years. She

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### Golding

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resigned from the Marine Life Protection Act Task Force to work with Promises2Kids.

Golding said she enjoyed working on boards and doing consulting work, and she certainly enjoyed the salary, but she said she missed working on something she had a passion for.

"I loved making money, are you kidding? Especially after being in public office, it was nice not to have to worry about the bills at the end of the month," she said. "But when (Promises2Kids) talked to me about (the job), I thought, 'It would be nice to wake up in the morning and deeply care about what I was doing again.'"

Golding first became involved with the Child Abuse Prevention Foundation when the organization came before

the County Board of Supervisors in the 1980s.

She began working closely with the group after visiting the Hillcrest Receiving home, the county facility in the 1980s where children who had to be removed from their homes were placed.

"The county did the best it could, but it was horrible," she said of the facility. "I mean, I started thinking of Charles Dickens."

Golding helped to establish a partnership between the county and the foundation in which the foundation raised the funds to build a new, better facility and then gave it to the county to run.

That facility, the Polinsky Children's Center, is still the foundation's home in Kearny Mesa. The facility can hold several hundred children at once, though the number is

usually much lower.

Lately, with the bad economy bringing additional stress into families, resulting in more abuse, there have been about 80 to 90 children at the facility.

The foundation changed its name recently to Promises2Kids, a trademarked name that Golding said was to bring the organization into the "21st century."

When the foundation first formed, child abuse was not a widely acknowledged problem, and the group's aim was to change that. Now the organization is trying to sound more hopeful.

"When a child is born, there is an implicit promise made to care and nurture that child until adulthood, and these are kids of broken promises," Golding said. "So we wanted a

name that represented promises to kids. That we were going to mend those promises."

Promises2Kids uses fundraising to help give kids birthday and Christmas presents who wouldn't otherwise have them.

The organization also is very supportive of education, offering scholarships and paying for special exams like Advanced Placement.

The group provides housing that also helps children transition into adulthood, allowing young adults over the age of 18 to have a supervised place to stay while they're entering the working world or going to school.

"As a society, we need to take care of (these kids) for two reasons," Golding said. "One, because it's the humane thing to do. And second, it's

also because if we don't take care of these children now, there's a likelihood we'll end up taking care of them later, because they had a childhood that did not lead them to be productive adults."

In July, Promises2Kids is holding a first-of-its-kind fundraiser, a private concert with the folk singer Jewel at the home of one of the organization's supporters. Those interested can buy tickets on the organization's Web site.

Golding said that due to the economy, charitable giving is down this year, and Promises2Kids is hoping this different kind of event will attract attention.

The supporter at whose home the concert will be held is Joan Waitt, the former wife of Gateway Computers founder Ted Waitt.

When she was mayor, Golding played a large role in convincing Waitt to move his company headquarters to San Diego, and she kept the relationship with the family.

Asked if she ever thinks about getting into politics again, she said she only does when people ask her that question.

"I do (think about it) period-

ically, but it passes through my brain very quickly," she said.

As mayor, she said some of her favorite accomplishments were the "6 to 6" program, in which schools stay open from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. to help parents. She said she is sad to see the San Diego Unified School District might be ending it for budget reasons.

She also pointed to the creation of public space through the Urban Land Preserve.

Golding was mayor of San Diego from 1992 until 1998.

Critics have said that a lot of the city's financial problems, such as the pension debt, began on Golding's watch, particularly since she and the City Council at the time were found by the investigative Kroll Report to have underfunded the pension.

But Golding said she is proud of how she left the city, and that others in office since her made bad decisions.

"When I left office, the city had the highest capital reserves, the lowest unemployment rate and the lowest crime rate," she said. "So I was very comfortable with how I left the city."

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