Over the last six months, Ashoka, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and hundreds of social entrepreneurs, thought leaders, and researchers in the United States have rallied around a vision for children's wellbeing: a culture where each child can cultivate a sense of self, purpose, and belonging. We have seen this mandate play out through our network of Pioneers across the country, a selective group of 122 social innovators who are transforming approaches to education, health, parenting, foster care, and more.

We're now at the moment where we announce our Champions of Children's Wellbeing. Our selection panel (more below) strived to represent the diversity of solutions and highlight the shifts necessary for a culture of Children's Wellbeing. The Champions will represent this network at the upcoming Children's Wellbeing Build Event, where they'll join RWJF and our network partners in Chicago on October 26th and 27th. Along with regional events anchored by Pioneers across the country, we'll collectively think about how to effect a culture shift and imagine next steps for our collective vision.

This isn't the end of our work… a culture shift isn't accomplished in the course of a six-month challenge. The power of the Children's Wellbeing Initiative is rooted in the network we have built and nurtured together.

Both RWJF and Ashoka are committed to building on this work in the next year and deepening our investments in this community— not only because of the momentum we have seen so far, but because we have organized our own missions around building this network of changemakers to bring about a culture of wellbeing.

Congratulations to everyone who has contributed to this inspiring community… the Pioneers, Fellows, the Changemaker School Leaders, summer conversation participants, network partners, and, of course, our Champions. We can't wait to continue working with you!

Who are the Children’s Wellbeing Champions?

**Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors, Sandra Gutierrez, Los Angeles, California [1]**
Cluster: The Little Prince
Engaging Latino parents as co-creators and leaders in education to increase student’s academic achievements and personal development.

**All Our Kin, Jessica Sager, New Haven, Connecticut [2]**
Cluster: Charlotte's Web
Unlocking the potential of women to raise the quality and accessibility of early care and education for our youngest, most vulnerable children.

**Village of Wisdom, William Jackson, Durham, North Carolina [3]**
Who were the judges?

Jamie Bussel, MPH, is a program officer at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation working in the area of childhood obesity and vulnerable populations. She designs and manages efforts that support environments and policies that promote the health of children and families. She seeks to develop innovative strategies to improve access to: healthy foods; opportunities for safe physical activity; and high quality early care and education for young children, especially the most vulnerable. Having joined the Foundation in 2002, Bussel directs initiatives that foster multidisciplinary partnerships and systems-level change strategies to transform the health of people and places.

Jose-Pablo Fernandez, Ashoka Fellow [14], Parents Alliance [16]
Jose-Pablo Fernandez is a social entrepreneur recognized by fellowships in Ashoka and the Purpose Prize. He founded Parents Alliance in 2007 to make Hispanic integration a success, educating low-income Hispanic parents and empowering them to become strong and vibrant in their communities. His focus is on mothers because they are the most important factor in their children’s education and changemakers that influence decisions that affect their communities. In 2016 he created 400 Voices as a collaborative group of Hispanic social entrepreneurs working as a team cognitive process to exchange ideas, feedback, and best practices to improve performance and impact of their non-profit organizations.

Edna Kissman, Kissman Langford Consulting [14]
Edna Kissman, a 35-year veteran in the communications consulting business, is associated with Ashoka since 1999. She was a trustee of Ashoka UK until the UK trust was replaced by the current legal structure. She is also the principal advisor of Ashoka UK when it comes to the kind of leadership communications that are needed in this crowded market. Edna owns her own communication consultancy, Kissmann Langford Consulting. Formerly, she was the Chief strategists of Burson-Marsteller, the worldwide premier agency in the world league table.

Lori Nathanson, Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence [15]
Lori Nathanson, Ph.D., is director of partnerships for the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence and an associate research scientist in the Department of Psychology. Lori develops and nurtures partnerships with youth-serving organizations, which advances the Center's strategy to teach emotional intelligence beyond RULER’s reach in PreK-12 schools. Prior to leading partnerships, Lori served as the director of research from 2013-2015 and was responsible for shaping the Center's research agenda, expanding the research portfolio, and supporting the Center’s team of researchers. Lori’s research focuses on social and emotional learning (SEL) with an emphasis on school-based intervention development, implementation, and evaluation.

Terei Rose, Ashoka Fellow [14], Baby’s Space [17]
Dr. Terei Rose is an Ashoka Fellow and founder of Baby’s Space—A Place to Grow. Her work aims to provide a strong foundation for children ages 0 to 8 from particularly underserved communities, so they can have a strong start towards success in school and in life. At Baby’s Space, families can access parental support, high-quality childcare, and ongoing resources to enable them to be successful -- all in one place. Recently launched, the Dr. Rose’s PLAYbook is a childcare curriculum for infants, toddlers, threes and parents that provides what teachers and parents need to promote healthy emotional and cognitive development for all children. Her book, Emotional Readiness, documents the research and practice of supporting the emotional wellbeing of children.

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