

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**



**BELOVED ACTOR WILLIE GARSON  
WHO ADOPTED SON FROM FOSTER CARE  
JOINS  
YOU GOTTA BELIEVE'S BOARD OF BELIEVERS**

**New York, NY (October 1, 2020) – You Gotta Believe (YGB)** announced today that actor **Willie Garson** will join its Board of Believers, a group of passionate volunteer advocates who dedicate themselves to helping the organization find loving parents for older children in foster care. Since adopting his son Nathen at 7 years old from foster care in 2010, Garson has been one of YGB's most vocal supporters, using his signature humor to share his family's story at various fundraising events over the years. As a member of the Board of Believers, Garson will continue to use his public platform to highlight the critical need for loving parents for older kids in the foster care system, and share his story with potential parents as an example of the benefits and joy that come with foster care adoption. Garson is creating vignettes for YGB giving advice to potential parents and busting some myths about adoption from foster care.

To celebrate National Adoption month, on November 17<sup>th</sup>, Garson will host a virtual event presented by Charter Communications, "Building a Family," a conversation with special guest, Nia Vardalos, who adopted her daughter from foster care.

"We are thrilled to have Willie join our Board of Believers," said **Jennifer Pinder**, Executive Director of You Gotta Believe. "His personal experience being a parent to a child who has experienced foster care makes him a perfect match for YGB. We love his sense of humor! He will be using that humor to help us communicate to potential parents what kids need and how to navigate the world of foster care to become a family."

"Adopting Nathen changed my life," said Garson. "Every kid needs a family that loves them like I love Nathen, and you get so much back when you're a parent. I'm excited to work with YGB to help find every kid in foster care the family they deserve."

Garson's arrival on the Board of Believers comes at a crucial time for YGB, as COVID-19 sheds light on the precarious situations that young people face as they age out of the foster care system. In a time of crisis, when we all need a safe place to shelter, many are turning to family – but too many older foster kids have nowhere to go. No one should have to face a crisis like this

alone. YGB is working tirelessly to make sure that every foster child has a place to go when emergencies arise, where they can feel lifelong support and unconditional love.

Fans can hear more from Garson and the YGB team by following them on Instagram @willie.garson and @yougottabelievenyc, and on Twitter @williegarson and @adoptolderkids.

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### **ABOUT YOU GOTTA BELIEVE**

YOU GOTTA BELIEVE (YGB), founded in 1995, focuses exclusively on finding permanent parents and families for kids in foster care with an expertise in working with young adults, teens, and pre-teens who are most in danger of aging out of the system alone.

Today, more than 400,000 children are in foster care in the US, and every year, as many as 17,000 of them will age out of the foster care system. Without the safety net of a forever family to provide the security and comfort most take for granted, these young people are left on their own to face a future filled with hardships — from lack of education to unemployment, higher rates of incarceration, poor health, early parenthood and homelessness (as much as 40 percent of these kids will experience this devastation in their lifetimes). In New York City alone, there are hundreds of kids currently awaiting adoption, with more than 900 kids on the verge of aging out.

COVID-19 has created many challenges that disproportionately impact kids in foster care and young people who have aged out without being connected to a loving family. Imagine yourself at 19, 21, or 24. Imagine being alone in New York during the pandemic and needing to shelter in place all by yourself. What if you lose your job? Your apartment? What do you do? Where do you go? Who do you call when you don't have a family?

For too many kids who age out of foster care, there is no family to turn to for support. COVID-19 is shining a light on the precarious situations faced by these young people. Those in independent living are asked to face shelter in place, in literal isolation. For the college students who were sent home for the semester, many foster kids were in a panic because they have no home. They had nowhere to go, creating a crisis of potential homelessness. They begged universities to let them stay on campus where they may have felt safe but were still alone and in crisis.

It's moments like this that You Gotta Believe's work to connect older kids in foster care is more critical than ever. Finding a family should always be the number one priority for every child in foster care. There is no substitute for the support it provides throughout life, and especially when emergencies arise.

### **ABOUT WILLIE GARSON**

Willie Garson has appeared in over 300 episodes of television and more than 70 films. He is best known for his long runs on television, as Mozzie on WHITE COLLAR, Stanford Blatch on SEX AND THE CITY, and Henry Coffield on NYPD BLUE. Other Regulars include ASK HARRIET, and JOHN FROM CINCINNATI. He recurred as the grifter with a heart of gold Gerard Hirsch on "HAWAII 5-0" since 2015, and now on MAGNUM P.I., and currently on SUPERGIRL.

Born in New Jersey, he began training at The Actors Institute In New York at 13, before majoring in Psychology and Theater at Wesleyan University. After graduation, he quickly started landing guest roles on shows such as CHEERS, FAMILY TIES, THIRTYSOMETHING, LA LAW, as well as recurring on a wide array of shows including X-FILES, TWIN PEAKS, TWO & A HALF MEN, STARGATE, PUSHING DAISIES, THE PRACTICE, ALLY MCBEAL, JUST SHOOT ME, SPIN, SALVATION, etc etc. His favorite long form miniseries role on TV was Dr. Kreutz for Steven Spielberg in the acclaimed miniseries TAKEN.

In film, other than reprising his SEX & THE CITY role for two features, he has collaborated with the Farrelly Brothers three times, in SOMETHING ABOUT MARY, KINGPIN, and FEVER PITCH. Others include SOAPDISH, GROUNDHOG DAY, MARS ATTACKS, THE ROCK, BEING JOHN MALKOVITCH, FEED, POLKA KING, and many more. He has often been re-used by such varied directors as Spike Jonze, Michael Bay, the late great Mike Nichols, and Ron Shelton. Current films include WALK TO VEGAS, MAGIC CAMP, BELLMEN, and GOD THE WORM.

As a director, Garson has directed episodes of WHITE COLLAR, GIRL MEETS WORLD, and, with Warner Brothers, is developing a half hour as producer/creator, in which he will also appear. LONE PINE, a feature for Garson to direct, is currently in development.

Onstage, Garson performs with theater companies such as Naked Angels, Manhattan Theater Club, Roundabout Theater, and The Geffen. He is very involved with many charities: amfAR, Camp Joslin for Diabetes, Doctors Without Borders, Habitat for Humanity, and especially The Alliance for Children's Rights, which facilitates adoptions in LA County.

Willie adopted son Nathen in Los Angeles in 2010, has twice served as National Spokesman for National Adoption Day, has been honored with the Francis Wheat Award from The Alliance, and many other honors. Willie and Nathen speak about adoption nationwide.

Aside from acting, Garson is known as a world-class poker player. Having been nicknamed "Evil Willie," Garson plays in tournaments all over the world, for charity, and through the WORLD POKER TOUR.

### **PRESS CONTACT**

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